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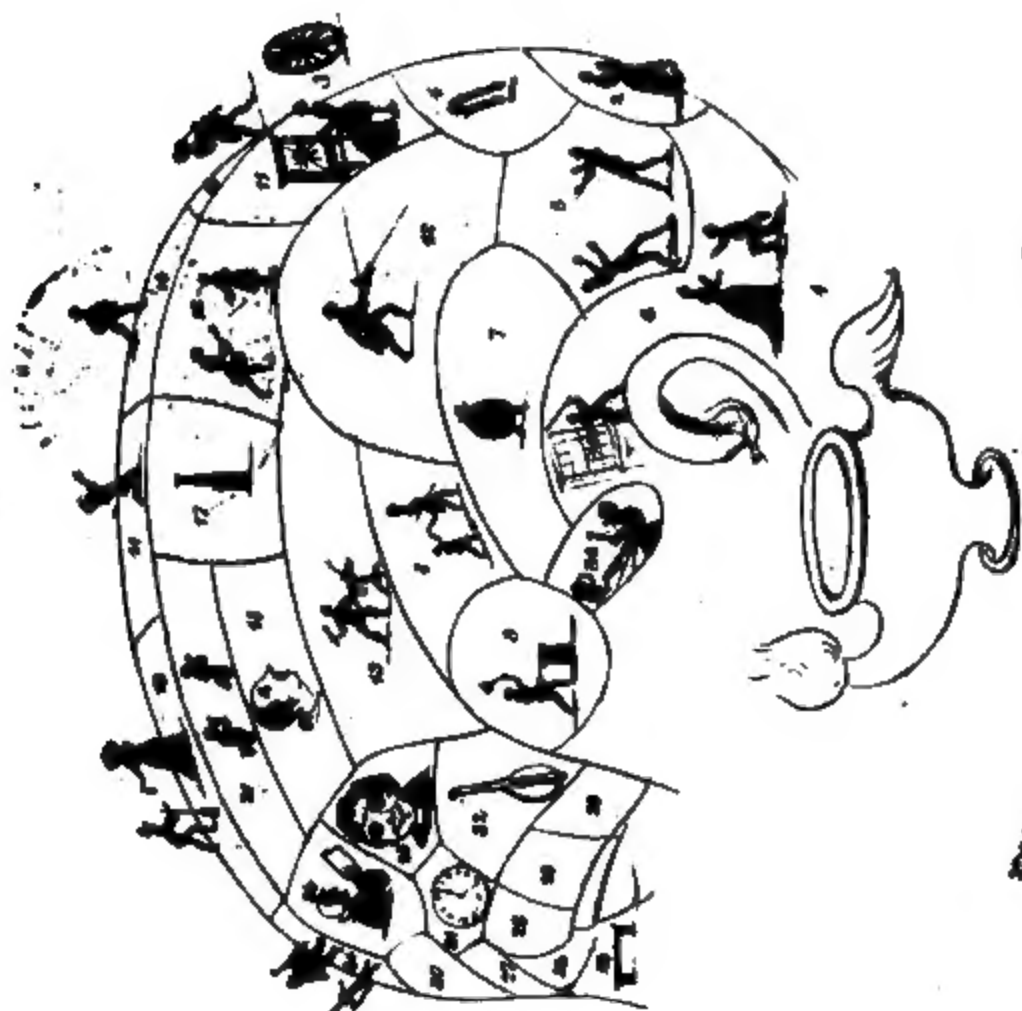


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PHYSIOLOGICAL MNEMONICS
A NEW MAP OF THE BRAIN.

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AVARICE

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THE IMPOSTOR;

OR,

BORN WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANTI-CONINGSBY."

PHRENOLOGICALLY ILLUSTRATED

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH Sq.

1846.

728

DIRECTIONS TO BINDER.



Phrenological Mnemonics, *frontispiece*

Mesmer, to face page 28 vol. 1

Augusta . . . 98 vol. 1

Aurelius . . . 172 vol. 1

Harry Scales . . . 223 vol. 1

Cecilia . . . 271 vol. 1,

Julia, . . . *frontispiece* vol. 2

Don Juan . . . 252 vol. 2

**The organs of public opinion *frontispiece*
vol. 3**

TO HENRY GEORGE ATKINSON, Esq., F. G. S.,

AS A MARK OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM

THESE VOLUMES ARE DEDICATED

INCANTATION.

**" If it were skipped, when 'tis skipped, then 'twere well,
It were skipped quickly."**

Macbeth, illegitimate version.

**" Vice I detest from the depths of my heart, and doubly
detest it,
Chiefly for causing so much prating of virtue itself,
How, you detest then virtue?—I would 'twere by all of
us practised,
And, God willing, the word never were mentioned again!"**

Schiller—unpublished translation.

**What's a book deprived of a preface?—certes
'Tis a headless spear, an imperfect monster,
Meteoric-stone-like it falls amongst us,
Rudely obtrusive.**

INCANTATION.

Introduced by no one, a chill repugnance
Holds us back, as once, in the fabled story,
Shrunk the dandy, seeing a stranger drowning—
How could he save him ?

When a scribe expects you to read three volumes,
Prudence, ere accepting his invitation,
Hints 'twere wise enquiries to make concerning
What is for dinner ?

“ Who are you ? what is your book about, sir ?
Where's your railway, who are the chief directors ?
Who the chairman ? where are the stopping stations ?
What is the damage ? ”

Then I answer—“ friend, I'm a travelled student,
Life with care regarding in every posture,
Back and front, light side and the dark, fore-shortened
And in perspective,

Mine's a railway, bordered by fields of fancy
On the the right ; reality's rocky mountains
Leftwards thrown their shadows, illumined by the
Gas of experience.

Passions wild, enrapturing love, caballings,
Darkling crimes, delusions of mystic science,
Wondrous revelations of nature's secrets—
These are my stations.”

INTRODUCTION.

A YEAR ago, I ventured to offer to the public a political burlesque, termed 'Anti-Coningsby,' which was perhaps received with more favor than it deserved ; certainly more than I myself ever anticipated. A few words in excuse of the many blunders, imperfections and even misprints of this trifle, may perhaps be excused. The notion of writing it occurred to me immediately after the appearance of 'Coningsby ; or, the New Generation,' than which it is difficult to conceive a more pleasantly written and

ingenious absurdity. I was, and still am a great admirer of Mr. D'Israeli's literary talents, (Vivian Grey and Contarini Fleming are novels not likely to be easily forgotten,) but the glaring nonsense of attempting to substitute a retrograde for a forward political and religious movement, was too *comical* to be resisted. Such an utter misconception of the spirit of the times, by so clever a man, appeared so improbable, that I at once came to the conclusion that the Honorable M. P. for Shrewsbury was merely acting for the sake of effect, in fact that he had determined upon becoming *very remarkable* at all hazards, laughing perhaps in his sleeve at the innocent youths who followed and adopted his presumed opinions. For indeed Coningsby had not long 'astonished the town' before sundry young friends of my own, began to shew unmistakeable signs Young Englandism. At first I could scarcely believe that a party was really about to be established upon so ridiculous a foundation, but at length reluctantly compelled to acknowledge the fact, I seized my pen, and in less than a couple of months produced the satirical extravaganza above alluded to. It may be imagined that there was little time for correction, indeed

except in the printer's proofs, I read but a small portion of the work even a second time, and I have never had the courage to do so since, for fear of discovering fresh errors. Before the first volume was completed, I was also unfortunate enough to be attacked by nervous headaches—no very pleasant companions to an author.

Such as it was, the critics fell upon it with hungry ferocity, although few of them seemed to understand the tone of burlesque irony and wilful exaggeration pervading the whole book ; and by invidiously isolated quotations, often totally misrepresented its tendency.

And why did they attack it?—not for ridiculing Young England and Mr. D'Israeli—they were all ready to join in the laugh. Not for its sarcasms upon the present Premier, or the Home Secretary of post office notoriety—they quoted the passages with unction. Not for its hints on India or indeed its political satire of any description—but for a few just though incautious strictures on a certain influential author, and the defence of one whom nobody else cared to defend ‘ Yet Brutus is an honorable man ; so are they all, all honorable men !’

Anti-Coningsby however heard its effect—and that was all desired by the author—a hundred echoes, unacknowledged extracts, and appropriation of ideas from its pages, bore testimony to this fact. The ‘New Generation’ was laughed down, and even their heroic leader (who continues to do great things despite his own theory as to the universal juvenility of mundane heros) sank all mention of the name, at least, in his new work ‘Sybil or the two nations,’ which, in superficial inconsistency, acknowledgedly outdoes its predecessor.

Schiller tells us in one of his exquisitely terse epigrams, (the greater part of which, with unaccountable indolence, were omitted from a recent translation of his poems.) that “When monarchs are building, the masons get work,” and this quiet contempt for criticism might accord with his system. I am however of opinion that *speaking* contempt, is much more effective. I shall therefore take the liberty of retaliating upon one or two of the most prominent culprits, with the view of rendering them more cautious for the future. Reformation being the only object of punishment consistent with the true spirit of philanthropy.

INTRODUCTION.

First and foremost, let me drag to light the individual who *did* the review for Fraser's Magazine, premising however that it was generally believed that Anti-Coningsby was the work of a certain authoress of rank, at present residing abroad. Upon this hint the critic spoke, and with all the chivalry and gentlemanlike delicacy peculiar to such persons, wound up some dozen pages of abuse, and ill-chosen extracts, including some invidiously misquoted Latin, by politely saying to her supposed ladyship. "Go woman and sin no more."

I need not remind the reader of the character to whom this sentence was originally applied, nor point out the vulgar and foul malignancy of the quotation under the circumstances.

And if I were to say to the anonymous reviewer "Blasphemous unmanly dog! keep your tongue from evil speaking, lying and slandering!" could any human creature blame me for the natural indignation prompting the speech? I think not.

We are so accustomed to see *posts* and *railings* in connection with one another, that the most unmitigated abuse from the morning paper of that name surprises no man, we shall therefore

inflict but one homely thrust upon them in return for their savage attack, the particulars whereof we do not at the moment remember. Vide Macaulay's article on Croker's edition of Boswell's life of Johnson, page 357, collected edition. The passage may be applied morally instead of physically by the reviewer in question.

It is scarcely worth while to allude to the snarls of certain minor literary scavengers, such as "The Court Journal, &c.," but I do take the liberty of protesting against the present partial and corrupted system of criticism under which newspapers feel themselves bound to revile every political opponent, and magazines degenerate into the mere tools of their publishers. (To which rule the Spectator, Critic, and several of the weekly papers, &c., form honourable exceptions.) Finding that no reliance is to be placed in reviews, and unable to peruse one tenth of the new works, constantly pouring from the press, the public at length becomes utterly indifferent to the progress of literature. But for me, I have long since arrived at the conclusion that hostile reviews can no more crush the reputation of a book worthy to survive them, than puffing praises how-

ever dearly purchased, can give fame or extended circulation to a stupid production. I take my stand in the lists of literature, dip my pen in *Gall*, and like the knights at ancient tournaments "defy all comers," in the words of Turtaios—

Tethnamenai gar kalon eni promachoisí pesonta
Andr'agathon, peri ē patrídí marnamenon.

By introducing literary criticism, satire of political and social evils, and popular illustrations of interesting facts in science, I have hoped to add to the interests of a romance, in which I trust no deficiency of adventure, plot, and carefully developed character will be found. But the day has gone by for mere fashionable novels. The age is utilitarian, and even novelists (the poets of present times) must conform to the mode. Nor do I think that a change from morbidly affected refinement and exclusiveness, and weak formal sentimentalism, to more practical and impassioned incident is by any means to be regretted. One of the reviewers in abusing a love scene in my former essay blamed it for being so *desperately in earnest*. The same fault will, I am happy to say, be found in the present volumes.

With regard to the illustrations I must observe that nothing but the difficulty—nay almost the impossibility of getting a stranger to carry out one's ideas would have induced me to aid by the imperfect efforts of my amateur pencil, my verbal powers of description, whether they are an improvement or not remains for the reader to decide.

One word to *Young England* ere concluding this preface. There has of late years crept into our *belles lettres*, in addition to the *soi disant fashionable* trash above mentioned, a violent predilection for low life, slang, and vulgarism of every kind. Dickens and Ainsworth led the way, and whole hosts became their followers. Would-be-comical monstrosities *usque ad nauseam* have filled the ephemeral publications of the day. Let us *endeavour* to re-establish pure classical taste, to inculcate admiration of the beauties and sublimities rather than the meannesses, and distortions of nature, to become free, liberal, unprejudiced students of philosophy, and this not in recurring to the barbarism of our feudal ancestors, or the advocacy of despotism, and pompous affectation of religionism (Puseyism—popery, if you like it better) as the mature author of

Coningsby would insinuate but by calmly observing and studying the signs of the present times, and boldly looking forward to the future. And remember, youth of England, that these are the words of one, who really, and practically belongs to *the new generation*.

THE IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER I.

CONTRAST.

MIDNIGHT was at hand, as in a small ill-furnished room, above a low shop, in one of the dirtiest, narrowest, and most ancient looking lanes in the oriental moiety of the English metropolis, were seated two individuals of the most opposite appearance conceivable. The one, an old man of at least three score, exhibited a set of pinched up, calf-skin coloured features,

in which dotage, stupidity, and cunning seemed to struggle for the ascendancy. His claw-like fingers were clasped upon his breast, over which a tattered dressing-gown was buttoned, the probable antiquity whereof would have baffled all the conjectures of the antiquarian curious, and irresistibly reminded one of the faded vestments worn by mummies in the crumbling catacombs of Egypt.

The other tenant of the room was a youth with a clear, pale complexion and placid features of almost feminine delicacy and beauty, shaded by long, dark brown, silk-like hair, which a Circassian Sultana might have envied. His small white hand supported a brow remarkable for intellectual development, and his dark hazel eyes flashed beneath eyebrows almost faultless in their arching symmetry. His dress consisted of a threadbare suit of coarse black cloth and the clean white collar of his shirt being

thrown back, displayed a neck and some portion of a breast, which a Sappho might have described, but a Phidias could never have imitated.

Surely it would have been difficult to discover two beings more violently contrasting in their exterior than these two men, whose mutual humanity appeared, in truth, the only link between them, the only point in which their orbits touched.

“Two and twenty years to-day, two and twenty years,” muttered the old man thoughtfully, “since we left Genoa ; you were not born then—not born.”

This remark was partly addressed to the speaker himself, in soliloquizing reminiscence, partly to the young man who by the light of a solitary candle pored with great attention over an ancient folio, in fact a worm-eaten and dusty edition of the works of Lord Bacon.

“ Two and twenty years !” exclaimed the youth, “ how slowly time passes !”

“ I fancy,” continued the old man without noticing this interruption ; “ I fancy I can see the old shop again—we lived on the ground floor of a palazzo—with marble flooring and such a low rent—such a low rent !”

The old man chuckled as he repeated the last words which he appeared to utter with peculiar exultation, and rubbed his hands over one another, till his knuckles cracked like an electric machine, in a manner peculiar to old misers ; whilst he gently stirred the fire with the toe of his dilapidated slipper, and then gazed—almost with affright—at the minute but sudden flame elicited by this extravagant proceeding.

“ Ha !” said the youth abruptly putting aside his book and turning to the fire, “ would that you had never left Italy !—I should like to

have seen its mountains and its vineyards, its dark eyed girls and marble palaces !”

“ A poor country though—a very poor country !” said the old man deprecatingly.

“ Poor !” exclaimed his companion wildly ; “ yes, poor in the dross you value so dearly ; but rich in a thousand joys which gold can never purchase. An English King may envy an Italian peasant his purple sky and gentle climate !”

“ Silly boy, silly boy,” muttered the old man, fixing his weak spectacled eyes upon the scanty fire.

A long silence followed.

There was something strange and unnatural in the manner and conversation of these two beings. They seemed rather to address themselves to their own thoughts, than to one-another ; neither respect nor affection appeared to mingle in their relation, yet, in the eyes of the world, they were bound by the nearest

and dearest ties of consanguinity—those of father and son.

“ You knew Lord Byron, did you not, at Genoa ? ” said the youth, as if by a sudden and painful effort, to his companion.

“ Knew him ? ” replied the old man, “ knew him !—he came almost every day to rummage over my stock of old books and medals—ha ! ha ! he was a keen man, was his Lordship, at a bargain—a very keen man ; I was obliged, you know, to ask him twice as much as my other customers, because, you see, he always used to beat a thing down so !—to be sure, one can afford to sell cheaply what one buys for next to nothing, but then there is the risk, and—

“ Yes, I understand,” interrupted the youth with ill-concealed impatience and disgust. “ I think I have heard you say that he admired my mother’s sketches ? ”

“ He did, indeed, very much, and offered very large sums for them—that is, large considering—but your mother was a foolish woman, a very foolish woman, and used to give them to him for nothing—absolutely for nothing—only think of giving them away like that, when she, or rather *I*, might have obtained such high prices for them ! But your mother was a clever woman—a very clever woman—she died, you know, on board the ship we returned by, in giving you birth—ah ! it is very late—very late ; we ought to be in bed ; good night, Alfred !”

“ Good night,” rejoined the youth.

The old man turned round as he reached the door—

“ Mind, Alfred,” said he timidly, “ do not sit up too late reading—I know you are very studious, but you will hurt your eyes, and waste so much candle — so much candle.”

The young man took no apparent heed of this economical injunction ; his eyes were intently fixed upon one of the knobs of a dilapidated chest of drawers in the corner of the apartment.

CHAPTER II.**BLOOD.**

No sooner did Alfred find himself alone, than a remarkable change took place in the expression of his features. His eyes flashed with exuberant delight as though he had triumphed over some difficult problem or lethiferous foe, his lip curled with the lofty pride of intellectual power, and he waved his arm with a strange and graceful majesty like some Chaldean sorcerer of the olden time weaving a spell to bind the spirit world.

“It cannot be,” he exclaimed with sudden energy, “that in my veins the blood of this old miser flows. Could I but trace a single point of moral or physical resemblance I might incline to credit the paternity, but not the torrid and the frigid zones can be more widely different than we in features, stature, mind, and disposition. On the other hand, everything conspires to prove the truth of my long cherished suspicions. My mother’s residence at Genoa—*his* frequent visits—the vast difference in the ages of my mother and her husband—the latter’s mean and avaricious disposition, the time of my birth, and above all, the striking resemblance I undoubtedly bear to that portrait of whose extraordinary likeness to the original my supposed father daily testifies. It must be so—an internal voice convinces me, and could I doubt the fact but for a moment, this single argument must at once destroy all scepticism.”

The speaker rose and walked across the

room. A superficial observer might have watched his course for miles and scarcely have detected the peculiarity, for it could hardly be termed a deformity with which he was afflicted. But so it was—he *limped*—one leg was shorter than the other; with all his beauty of countenance, with all his loftiness of bearing, the hero of these pages was *club-footed*.

He advanced towards a curious old circular mirror in a frame of carved oak above the fire-place, and contemplated for some time with an aspect of grave and critical scrutiny, the reflection of his fine oval countenance. Then turning to a small water-colour sketch of the author of *Childe Harold*, he gazed upon it intently for a few moments, after which he alternately regarded the mirror and the painting, and then threw himself with an air of triumphant conviction into the old arm chair from which he had risen.

To commonplace minds ancestral pride is of

all things the most absurd and contemptible. Even by many who entertain it, it is at best regarded as a venial weakness, but in the eyes of the enlightened student of human physiology it assumes not only a rational, but even a laudable aspect.

Well knowing that virtues, talents, feelings, and inclinations, both good and evil, are handed down from generation to generation, he draws a simple inference from the probable fact, that as his ancestors have been men accustomed to ennobling and gentle pursuits, to command rather than obey, to refined viands, and invigorating beverages, to well ventilated dwellings, pure air, and cleanly habits, in fine, to a moral and physical culture superior to that of the common herd, so that he himself must inevitably stand both spiritually and corporeally in a similar position.

Some reflections of this kind flitted rapidly through the brain of our hero, who cared little for the *bar sinister* involved by

the genealogy he had adopted, but was sufficiently agreeably occupied in drawing comparisons between his own idiosyncrasy and that of his poet sire, with whose life and writings he was, I need scarcely add, profoundly acquainted.

It has been remarked before now, some few thousand times, that people in general find little difficulty in convincing themselves of that which above all other things they are most ardently desirous of believing. Nor did the present instance prove an exception to this rule.

The miser's son, before retiring to rest, had discovered between his own mind and that of the deceased bard a similitude even more striking than their unquestionable physical resemblance.

"And am I," thought Alfred, "I the son of so exalted a father, to work out an obscure destiny in the grovelling station to which I am apparently born? Am I to waste these

stores of varied information the result of the unintermitting labour of years, these superior powers and talents, which I am conscious of possessing, these refined feelings and capacities for enjoyment which in my solitary studies I have so assiduously cultivated behind the counter of a wretched book-stall ! for ever excluded from association with those whose society could alone afford me pleasure, whose minds alone are fitted to comprehend me ?

“ Avaunt ! ye dull sectarians who see in man nothing but the victim of original sin and unrelenting destiny. I scorn your poor-spirited and debasing theories ! Man is—should be—at least I for one will be the arbiter of my own fates—ay, and perhaps of those of many others !

“ Knowledge is power—the sciences of nature are mine ; courage is strength—I laugh at every fear—prejudice is folly—Spinoza, Descartes himself could not be more unshackled,

and let the worst happen, my hopes blasted, my schemes defeated, and myself held up to the scorn and odium of a darkened world—Another sun may shine upon my efforts—another clime receive my body Should even universal failure wait me, there yet remains the dull, well beaten track of unaspiring mediocrity—there yet remains the grave which reason teaches me to regard without a shudder. Pain is the only evil I can recognize—abhorred fiend ! let every inlet of my being be closed to thy pestiferous influence, whilst each minutest pore gapes to receive the heavenly breath of pleasure. Nymph divine ! let thy celestial essence ever gird me—me, thy eternal votary !

“ How many thousands miserably vegetate, through three-score years, to close their mean career—the brightest joys of life a seven sealed book ! Such beings *exist*—I contemplate, to *live*.

“ To live in glorious delight, and when life offers no untasted bliss, no novel object to excite my hopes, no mystic secret yet to be unravelled, when pleasures known, all pall and new ones fail, *then* I'll *despair*—*then* I'll *repent* my course—BUT NOT TILL THEN !”

CHAPTER III.

DEATH.

A FEW mornings afterwards our hero (for such in default of a better is Alfred Milford) was much surprised by the non-appearance of his *soi disant* father at the breakfast table, and having waited for some considerable time, he imagined that the old man must be ill, and accordingly having first concluded the meal, ascended to his bed room.

No answer being returned to his repeated

knocks, he opened the door and entered the apartment. Advancing to the side of the bed, he was struck by the unearthly pallor of the features, and the fixed, glassy stare of the eyes. He seized a small mirror, and held it before the old man's mouth ; no symptoms of breathing were to be detected ; he felt the hands ; they were cold and clammy. The miser was dead.

Alfred had never seen a corpse before, and an unaccountable sensation came over him. He felt no regret at the old man's death ; on the contrary, nothing could have given him greater satisfaction ; but there is a something startling in the sight of a form which but the day before was instinct with life, however feeble, thought, however narrow, and motion, however decrepid, degraded to a mere clod of senseless matter, disagreeable to the sight, and revolting to the touch of its fellow men.

“ One bar, however, to my success re-

moved?" quoth our hero sternly, as soon as he had completely satisfied himself of that important fact. "Now to remove another trifling obstacle, and Death and I have done our morning's work."

So saying, he advanced towards an old battered escrutoire in the corner, and having unlocked it with a key which he drew from the pocket of the deceased man's coat, he, after a short search, possessed himself of a small paper carefully folded and indorsed. This he tore open, and regarded for some time with an expression of sarcastic contempt.

"To the society for the propagation—ha-ha! we will remedy this folly by and bye, in the mean time we must keep up appearances; so to begin"—he rang the bell violently, and his features assumed a solemn and lugubrious expression.

"Mary," said he with apparent agitation, when a slovenly servant-maid at length responded to his summons, "I fear my father

is dead !— run to the nearest surgeon's, that, if possible, something may be done to recover him before it is too late ; tell him to bring his lancet with him — quick — quick ! ”

The servant instantly departed and our hero seated himself at the foot of the bed, in a sad and meditative attitude.

“ Now,” thought he, “ I shall have to listen to the commonplace consolations and pious exclamations of our particularly scanty acquaintance ; luckily we have no relations, that I know of, so that it will soon be over ; ah ! here comes the surgeon.”

“ I will bleed him directly,” said the hard-by abiding hakim, advancing to the bed side of the deceased, “ but I see that he has been dead for some hours.”

“ Is there no hope ? ” said Alfred.

“ Not the most remote,” replied the surgeon.

“ It must have been very sudden,” remarked our hero.

“ Yes ; I should think it must,” rejoined the Esculapius.

“ What do you suppose was the cause of his death ?” inquired Alfred shrugging his shoulders.

“ It is impossible to conjecture,” replied the other.

“ Impossible ?”

“ Without a *post mortem*,” corrected the surgeon.

“ I have lost an excellent father,” said Alfred pressing his hand against his forehead.

“ Take a little brandy and water,” prescribed the general practitioner.

“ Who can minister to a mind diseased ?” rejoined Alfred, sorrowfully shaking his head.

“ Who, indeed !” snivelled the apothecary.

CHAPTER IV.

A PROFESSION AND A NAME.

It was the night after the funeral ; Alfred was again alone in the same old room and the same old arm-chair in which he originally presented himself to the eyes of the reader. On a table by his side were writing materials, and a variety of papers, which he examined with great attention.

“ The last will and testament,” muttered he aloud, fixing his dark, expressive eyes upon

a paper he held in his hand, “ will at any rate serve me as a schedule of the property. Let me see—two thousand seven hundred and sixty-five pounds, eleven shillings, and nine pence three farthings, in the three per cent consolidated bank annuities—it has an agreeable sound, by Mammon ! I wonder how the old fellow managed to save such a sum by selling old books and woodcuts—*cum multis aliis quæ nunc describere longum est*—with other antiquarian trash it would take a life time to enumerate.

“ To be sure we lived wretchedly enough, and after all I believe I gained more by the old books than he did. I extracted their spirit before he turned them into consoles, and now my propitious stars have made me lord of both.

“ Then I perceive—there is the lease of the house—that I shall sell with all convenient expedition—and the stock of old books—they

will fetch something, I presume. Well, fortune smiles upon me at last—to go a step farther than the Sicilian, I *have* a point to rest my lever on, and I *will* move the world.

“What is the Archimedean screw to the power of ready cash! ridiculous comparison!

“The world is open before me, and I am free to choose my own position. Suppose I were to enter myself at one of the inns of court and study for the bar, spend all my money on my noviciate, and take the chance of getting meals and clients afterwards. Or shall I plunge amid the mire of commerce, and either win a plum, or die a beggar. Or rush to Oxford, take degrees and orders, then vegetate a pious orthodox and half starved curate. Or walk the hospitals, and pass the hall, then inhabit a house with a ruby lamp over the door, and display a surgery

bell, torn nightly from the land of rosy dreams, and

“ Nature’s best restorer balmy sleep,”

to aid the philoprogenitive efforts of loving wives and maidens. Or shall I strut in gaudy livery, an illpaid warrior in country quarters. Or join the mob of artists, and daub flattering portraits of old and ugly women, and the fat, unmeaning faces of their children. Or as an architect raise suburban villas ; an engineer, and plan tremendous railroads ; or go to sea and pass long months deprived of woman’s soft and gentle intercourse, to me the very breath of life ! Or take a farm and cultivate corn for pheasants. Or worse than all, buy half a hundred quills and scribble food for harsh and careless critics to snarl at in their ignorance.

“ These are the common turnpike roads of life, along whose dusty course the herd of

lawyers, merchants, parsons, doctors, soldiers and artists, sailors, builders, farmers and self-deceiving poets plod their way with slow pedestrian toil. I've more ambition ; I must drive the mail !

“ An independent nobleman ! there's music in the very sound. Lords are but Lords by the subservient world's courtesy, and I, if skilful enough to enforce that courtesy, am, I opine, as good a Lord as they. A rebel, is but an unsuccessful patriot—imposture—but imposture when unveiled, and arts like mine defy discovery. So be it then, I hereby do confer rank, title, and nobility on myself. Money I have to commence the character, and ingenuity to sustain it, by means fair or foul. A story and a name are all now wanting.

“ Let me consider—English titles are dangerous, Debrett's infernal peerage would betray me ; the title must be foreign then—a Count. Yes ; I am a Count. Of course I am ; I wish I could remember how our illus-

trious family gained the title. Ah ! I have it ; my grandfather was sent to Russia on a secret mission, and for his services to the Muscovite government, ennobled at St. Petersburg. I have heard my father tell the story as a child, but do not remember the particulars. Not being rich he lived in great retirement in London, or its neighbourhood, devoting all his time to my education.

“ This golden snuff-box (yet unbought) was a present from the generous emperor—ha, ha, ha ! a splendid tale, I’ll write it down at once, and read it ten times over to fix it on my memory, and prevent the contingency of variations. Perhaps by often telling the same story I shall myself believe the thing at last or nearly so, and that would be advisable.

“ Now, for a name—a grand, high-sounding, interesting name—a name whose very tone is aristocratic—a name—stay, if my life must be an acted lie, my name at least shall have a dash

of truth. Biron—yes, Count de Biron is my name ; and for a baptismal designation, by heavens I'll take Mesmer—glorious Mesmer ! the bold discoverer of nature's mystic secrets—and, as I've heard, my mother's distant relative. Yes, *Mesmer Count de Biron* is my name !

1844



CHAPTER V.**MORALITY.—PRECAUTIONS.**

HAVING thus delivered himself, Biron (as we shall henceforth denominate our hero) deliberately tossed the dead miser's will into the fire, and watched its rapid consumption by the greedy flames with an expression of grim satisfaction that sat somewhat strangely upon his beautiful and almost girl-like features.

“ Oh the folly, fraud, and injustice of the human race !” exclaimed the self-made Count

in a bitterly ironical tone of pseudo virtuous indignation, "who not only permit a privileged few to deprive them of their equal birthrights as men, and to monopolise during their lifetime the earth and the produce of its fertile soil, or what is, in fine, its simple representative, money, with all its attendant comforts and enjoyments, but actually allow them after death arbitrarily to perpetuate their illegal possessions to others, no matter whether wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, compelling countless generations to bear the burthen of their sins and suffer inconceivable miseries, the result of their primeval rapacity. For my part I reassume my native right—the right of occupancy, as lawyers term it. I love not sordid toil, and see not why I should be doomed to labour for my daily bread, in sweat and dark anxiety, whilst others, far more worthless, revel in every delight that earth can offer !"

Certes, Mesmer de Biron was a very wicked

youth, notwithstanding his silken locks and fine dark eyes—a positively shocking character! But then it must be considered that he was almost entirely self educated, having left school at an early age, and principally gleaned his knowledge from unassisted solitary study, the indiscriminate perusal of his supposed father's strange assortment of books, and the shelves of a neighbouring circulating library. Even as a child he had been conspicuous for his deficiency in the repetition of the catechism by rote, and his contempt for all established authority.

But we have undertaken to relate his history, not as that of a perfect and unexceptionable young gentleman like the Jamiesian heroes of the times bye-gone, but simply as a remarkable individual whose thoughts and adventures furnish subject matter for much curious psychological analysis.

We have no wish to extenuate his vices, but trust that the indulgent reader will not,

as is the general fashion of these times, accuse us of participating in or at any rate approving of our hero's misdeeds, because we do not stop to embellish each with supereminently moral annotations, and ultra virtuous axioms accompanied by mental turning up of the eyes, and pious exclamations of sincere horror at his proceedings.

Having destroyed the obnoxious document above mentioned, our adventurer made three weighty resolutions, which he swore, by the shades of his father, to keep sacred under all circumstances whatever.

The first was never to know or recognize any of his former associates, any acquaintances of the defunct miser, or any person or persons aware of his real name and origin, whenever or or wherever he might encounter them; and this was the less difficult from the studious and retired mode of life he had previously cultivated.

Secondly, he resolved to forget with all

convenient speed every fact relative to his cast off family and station, which might militate against the little romance of history --he had adopted.

And thirdly, he determined upon betaking himself to *la belle France* as soon as certain necessary arrangements were effected, persuaded that it would be infinitely more prudent and advantageous to make his grand *début* in his assumed character abroad than at home, and quite out of range of the atmosphere he had formerly so reluctantly inhaled. This last resolution however he soon had reason to recant, as will be seen hereafter.

The funds happening at this crisis to stand above par, he proceeded to sell out the whole of his stock immediately, and paid the money, which, with what he obtained by the sale of the other effects, amounted to about three thousand pounds, into a banker's at the West End to the account of that distinguished young nobleman—Count Mesmer di Biron.

Finally, having taken up his quarters at a quiet second-rate but respectable hotel, he ordered a couple of suits of clothes at the most fashionable and expensive tailor's in the metropolis, and in every other respect provided himself with a wardrobe appropriate to his high rank and pretensions. A splendid dressing-case from Mechi's, boots from Hubert, Parisian gloves and hat, cards and card case, and unexceptionable cane, in short, everything that according to his idea appertained to the outward mien of a gentleman of good family and moderate fortune.

Since his supposed father's decease he had permitted a dark, silken fringe of hair to usurp, by degrees, possession of his upper lip, a satin opera-tye replaced the once open collar and carelessly exposed neck; in truth, as he stood before a psyche in his new and well-fitting costume with his sable-trimmed great coat, his wrinkle scorning gloves, his flexile walking stick, his long dark curling hair and neat

mustache, and his slight but athletic form instinct with strength, grace, and nervous energy, he looked—aye, every inch—a nobleman! And those who had known him in his youth of poverty and seediness, must have had keen eyes to recognize, in the magnificent looking individual before us, the misanthropic melancholy student, ere-while the tenant of a petty book-stall in one of the dull dirty city's—dullest, dirtiest, and most obscure thoroughfares.

“I can imagine,” thought the aspiring Mesmer “old Mops the grocer meeting me and starting with a sort of dim remembrance or half recognition, then hastily continuing his way, laughing at himself for the absurd and utterly ridiculous supposition.

Or should he venture to believe the evidence of his memory and address me, I can picture his confusion, dismay, and apologies, on my deliberately elevating my eyebrows and calmly observing—Really, sir, you must mistake me

for somebody else, I have no recollection of our having ever met before——

You are not Mr. —— ?

I have not that honor —— I wish you, as the Americans say, ‘a pretty considerable, damned, particular good morning,’—-or something to the same effect, couched perhaps in less objectionable language.

I——r——I beg your pardon, sir,—-quite a mistake, I see now---different voice---altogether different---very sorry.

Then I should bow to the poor embarrassed devil with good humored condescending politeness, and walk coolly away, leaving him with open mouth and eyes, muttering a thousand curses on his own super-eminent stupidity.”

After all our hero *was* a different person, and had in fact so completely divested himself of his *ci devant* individuality, that the comedy above rehearsed in his imagination seemed in as little danger of a performance upon the

stage of reality, as, (to keep up the theatrical metaphor) the tale recorded between the boards of these no doubt highly entertaining volumes, is most assuredly but a faint commemoration of events once acted upon the boards of life, and still---*O tempora! O mores!*—most successfully acting!

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE THEATRE

WE left Mesmer imagining improbabilities before a looking-glass. This was not, however, an occupation to afford any very lasting excitement; accordingly our adventurer seized his *chapeau*, and, it being about the ninth hour, sallied forth in search of fresh amusement.

Passing the Haymarket theatre, and the bills having an attractive look, he forthwith

entered that temple of Thespis, and was soon comfortably established in one of the stalls.

The first piece being over, he stood up in a gracefully lounging attitude, with his back to the orchestra, and surveyed the beauty in tiers around him through his new opera glass, with the easy manner and languid nonchalance of a twenty seasoned dandy.

Scarcely however had he glanced along the dress circle, when a face in one of the private boxes completely rivetted his attention.

The sight of the Gorgon's grisly and snake entangled head could not have exercised a more petrifying effect upon the savage band of Pentheus, than did that exquisitely lovely countenance upon the fascinated Biron.

He stood like a marble statue in a museum--- a pump in a square, a hat-stand in a hall--- pray, choose your simile, as sings the bard of Greece in his inimitable Juan. We don't

pretend to be economical with other people's ideas, so if you are not of opinion that comparisons are as odious as the proverb insinuateth, pray liken my hero to a tea-urn, a camphine lamp, the Duke of York's column, Her Majesty's patronage of art, science, and literature, or anything else in the world that stands still and does not move either forwards or backwards, upwards, downwards, obliquely, diagonally, in a straight line, a crooked one, or in any other conceivable direction.

In short, Mesmer stood in a "pretty considerable fix," as we are given to understand the Yankee barbarians on the other side of the ocean express themselves. His "Dolland" still raised to his eye still pointed towards the private box, in which, like a brilliant diamond brooch in (use a significant commercial idiom) a ditto of red morocco lined with velvet, was set or seated, the lustrous gem of beauty to whom our susceptible hero had, for the time being,

already, (legally speaking) sold, assigned, transferred, and made over his valuable and fire circulating heart; though I must candidly confess it my opinion as a conscientious man of law, (I once read a volume and a half of Blackstone's commentaries) that the *want of consideration* would have rendered the conveyance practically void—at any rate in court.—Courting is quite another affair I apprehend.

He stood and gazed. The orchestra commenced their toil—he heard them not. The curtain rose—he marked it not. The pitites called upon him “to sit down,” to “remove his hat,” to “take off his head!” their words fell upon his ear unheeded.

At length an individual behind him touched his shoulder with an umbrella; he started, felt inclined to blush at his absence of mind—but did not—and sank back into his seat still gazing on the star that threw its gentle radiance

over his night, with almost passionate intensity.

Meanwhile the young lady becoming conscious of Biron's enthusiastic scrutiny, and either supposing him an acquaintance or reciprocally (perhaps magnetically) attracted by the beauty of his features, or as is most plausibly to be conjectured incited by simple curiosity, in like manner raised her opera-glass to her eye and regarded the young Count *more suo* with most persevering vigilance.

Delightful communion of soul with soul, of which the eye is as it were the window, brought by the magic medium of science, in the shape of Dolland's opera-glasses, to such charming, apparent proximity whilst the placid consciousness of the really intervening distance permits the soft enrapturing intercourse unbroken in upon by blushes, cast down eyes, and the spiteful comments of your saintly prudes and still more prudish sinners !

“Farewell angelic dream !” murmured the *soi disant* De Biron as he watched his unknown charmer receding from the box, “farewell—I fear, for ever !”

But, as she reached the door of the *loge*, to our hero’s ineffable satisfaction the beautiful sorceress turned round for an instant, her dark fur tippet exquisitely contrasting with her ivory neck and coquettishly peeping shoulders, and bent one last look upon him, then vanished like a silvery vision of the night.

Mesmer felt a sudden pang dart like a poniard through his breast ; he absolutely groaned.

Another moment, and he was outside the theatre. He would follow her home ; he would find out where she lived—he would—but just as he reached the door, two vehicles drove from it in totally opposite directions. Who was to tell him which contained his goddess ?

But she might not have left the theatre !—

fragile reed of hope ! For full a quarter of an hour he watched in vain, then muttering an exclamation of despair he entered the Café next door—and ordered—some whisky punch and a cigar.

CHAPTER VII.**EAVESDROPPING.**

IF there was one redeeming point in Mesmer de Biron's character it was his enthusiastic appreciation of beauty. Yes, wondrous as it may appear, this strange being from whose heart honor, shame and remorse were for ever banished, the ruling principle of whose nature was a pride boundless as that of the fallen archangel Lucifer, the fabled monarch of the fiends, a giant selfishness almost sublime in its

complete consistency, thrilled with delight before a painting or a statue, bounded with joy on beholding a magnificent landscape—judge, then, of his sensations at the sight of one of the loveliest specimens of female beauty, a picture lighted by the fire of passion, of all the works of nature, at once the most attractively enchanting, the most undoubtedly divine!

“Matchless girl!” thought the stricken Mesmer as he abstractedly stirred his punch with his cigar.

“The London and Bubbleton railway shares will be at a premium to-morrow, I expect,” said a business-like voice in the next box.

“Good heavens! if I should never see her again,” continued the soliloquizing Biron with a feeling nearly allied to desperation.

“Then I shall sell out, of course,” replied a second voice in reply to his companion’s previous remark.

“Who can she be I wonder! I would give

a hundred guineas to know her name or residence !” thought the Count.

“ Don’t throw away your money,” said the first voice coolly ; “ patience, my dear fellow, and the shares will go up like a balloon.”

“ I feel devilishly miserable !” thought Biron ; “ waiter ! bring me another cigar ; it is no use giving way—pooh ! Mesmer Count de Biron, be a man ; consider how improbable it is that you will ever see her again—pehaw, childish nonsense !”

“ And about that house ?” said the second voice in the next box in a lower tone than its owner had hitherto used.

Our hero having roused himself from his reverie was induced, by the mysterious way in which this question, in the adjoining box, was asked, to give his attention, in some measure, to the conversation carried on behind him, glad of something to distract his thoughts from the fruitless consideration of a subject which

could but excite feelings of disappointment and vexation.

“ Well,” replied the first speaker, “ in my opinion the sooner it is done the better ; at any rate I know this, that if *I* had the money at command, to-morrow’s sun should not go down before the bargain was closed.”

“ But are you sure that he is persuaded of the weakness of his title ?”

“ Quite—positively. In fact I made him believe that in case of a law suit the chances were, if anything, rather in favour of the other party claiming.”

“ And you are *quite* certain that there is no *real* danger ?”

“ My *dear* Cashall *do* you know who I am, or—”

“ I beg your pardon—I beg your pardon ; it shall be done at once ; pray arrange it all for me without delay.”

“ And the promissory notes ?” said the other almost in a whisper.

"Yes, yes ; they shall be given up—you shall have them the moment the deeds are signed."

"Ha ! ha ! a new way to pay old debts," chuckled the other.

"Hi ! hi !" laughed Cashall ; " by the way, what did you say was the number of the house ?"

"Twenty-seven, D—— Street," said his companion slowly, and distinctly, whilst the other wrote down the address in his pocket-book.

"It is a splendid house," said Mr. Cashall's obliging friend, " and in a most desirable situation, decidedly fashionable, and likely to become still more so from the projected improvements ; the rent must be, at the least, two hundred a-year."

"Two hundred, eh ? said Cashall, " not bad interest for *twelve*, is it ?

"Between sixteen and seventeen per cent ;" replied his companion dryly.

“ Well, I am very much obliged to you, and if I ever have an oppor—”

“ Not another word, my dear sir ! you give me up those little scraps of paper of mine which, *entre nous*, are worth little or nothing, for I never intended to pay them, and you owe me nothing or next to nothing.”

This was uttered in a half jocular, half serious manner.

“ Gad ! you are a cool hand Monville,” replied Cashall ; “ but we must be going . Ah ! it is raining, very fast too, have you an umbrella ?”

“ No, I never carry one ; I do not mind the wet.”

“ You are not afraid of drowning ; reserved for a loftier destiny, eh ?” said the other laughing at this stalest of jokes.

“ Ha-ha !” laughed Monville with an almost imperceptible tinge of sarcasm in his manner, as they quitted the coffee room.

From the moment these two individuals had

when the *sno-jare* Count had regarded them with quiet but marked attention. In the taller of the two, a stout, burly, middle aged man, in a drab great coat, with huge black whiskers and eye-brows, a large aquiline nose, and a countenance in which the animal essentially predominated, he at once recognised him who had been addressed as Cashall, and whom he rightly conjectured to be a man of commercial pursuits of some kind or other. His companion Monville, a fair, slim, good-looking man, of about eight and twenty, he was inclined to regard as a member of the legal profession, and there, too, the event did justice to his penetration.

"Waiter," said Biron, as soon as the door closed upon the two strangers, "have you a pen or a pencil?"

"Yes, in a moment," replied that personage, awed by our hero's dignified and aristocratic appearance.

De Biron drew a card-case from his pocket,

scribbled a few hieroglyphics upon the back of one of the cards, paid for his punch and cigars, and returned to his hotel to dream of the bright-eyed beauty of the Hay-market.

Had his soul depended upon the event he could not have told the name of a single character represented in the comedy which he had—*not* witnessed.

CHAPTER VIII.**THE TEST.**

ALTHOUGH not heavily, the rain still continued to descend, and the bleak wind moaned piteously along the streets, as Mesmer quitted the Café, and without noticing the call of a solitary cabman who still lingered upon the stand before the theatre, proceeded homewards on foot with long and rapid strides.

It was one of the peculiar traits in the character of this singular man to take the

greatest pleasure in things which to most other people were sources of infinite discomfort and annoyance. Wind and rain were his especial delight, indeed, his nature seemed almost to partake of the amphibious, for he would actually often select a circuitous route in preference to the direct road, on occasions such as we are describing.

Whether this was to be referred to an innate spirit of contradiction, to his birth upon the waves, or to any other cause, physical or moral, I leave to the decision of the more profound students of human physiology.

Here let it suffice to state the simple fact that such was positively the case with our eccentric hero.

. He had not walked far in his whimsical defiance of the elements, when he was startled by hearing his name --- his *real* name distinctly uttered behind him. He started, and his first impulse was to walk on without noticing the appeal, but a small hand laid gently upon his

arm, induced him to turn round and confront the speaker.

A tall, sickly looking girl, with a face of more than ordinary beauty, whose pallor was rendered almost ghastly by the light shining through a green bottle in a neighbouring chemist's window, poorly attired and dripping with wet, confronted him.

"Alfred!" said she in a voice trembling with emotion, "dear Alfred, how glad I am to see that you have become rich—for what other conclusion can I draw from your present appearance — Ah! you do not know what I have suffered!"

"But really, you,"—Mesmer began, but the girl, without heeding his interruption, and pressing his hand to her bosom, continued with increased animation.

"You cannot conceive all the misery I have endured—I will not enter into details, they could but pain you—but oh! how glad I am that we have met to-night, for you will forgive

me, Alfred,---you *must* forgive me when I acknowledge that to-night---this fearful night! I have wandered forth, driven by want, by starvation---not my own---but my child's, *our* child's, to seek for bread---now that every other resource has failed me---in degradation and infamy!"

"My dear girl," said Mesmer calmly, unmoved in the slightest degree by the touching accents of maternal affection and devotion to himself, in which his poor victim had delivered herself, "you evidently mistake me for another, my name is Count de Biron."

"What!" exclaimed the girl, starting back, "is it possible?---Indeed I beg your pardon, sir: there is a great resemblance between your face and that of a friend I once had, excuse me, I am sorry I detained you."

"Stay," said Biron, "although I am not the person you took me for, as I have heard the tale of your misfortunes and am convinced of the truth of what you have stated---it would

have been strange if he had not been so—
“Allow me to offer you a slight assistance, which may perhaps be the means of rescuing you from an abyss, whence there is no return—good night—be honest, industrious, and virtuous, and bright days may yet be in store for you, for remember, ‘virtue is its own reward’—its only reward too, in most cases!” thought Biron, with an internal smile of derision.

“May God reward you for your kindness!” sobbed the unfortunate, awed by the impressive way in which the last words had been uttered, and grasping the gold which Biron tendered with all the nervous eagerness of destitution.

“No thanks,” said Mesmer, kindly, “it is nothing to me, I have plenty and to spare; tell me where you live, and you may perhaps hear further from me.”

The girl mentioned an obscure street in the suburbs, and would have reiterated her expressions of gratitude, but the generous stranger was already striding away.

“How very like my dear Alfred!” she

murmured. "Ah! if *he* could but see my present state!---that is, if he yet lives---for his mysterious disappearance has never been accounted for, he may have been murdered---terrible thought!--and yet better to die, to sleep in the peaceful grave, than to suffer the united pangs of poverty and remorse as I do!"

Was it imagination that suggested to the ear of the drenched victim of passion and misplaced affection, a stifled laugh of scorn from behind her? She hurried onwards to her poor abode with quickened steps and palpitating heart. Who that has never felt want, can depict the joy arising even from the prospect of a meal.

Meanwhile---strange anomaly in the nature of mankind!--the unprincipled, or rather the *wrong* principled Mesmer, felt all, and more than the usual pleasure resulting from the feeling of having relieved a suffering fellow creature. Perhaps Biron could be

generous though incapable of being just---his heart could swell with benevolence whilst contemplating the darkest deceptions, and the basest frauds ; could congratulate itself upon bestowing a few paltry pieces of gold, of which he could not possibly feel the want, upon a being who but for his selfish thirst of enjoyment might have remained pure and happy in the possession of virtue, respectability, and comfort.

Perhaps even in his breast the voice of paternal affection was not altogether silent, and he would save the child of his selfish and unreflecting passion, from the horrors of the most terrible of deaths. All this is barely possible.

CHAPTER IX.

MADNESS.

EARLY the next morning our hero was aroused by a noise overhead, suggestive of the notion that all the devils in Pandemonium had either broken loose or had a holiday given them---and devils are addicted to gymnastics, or the pantomimic philosophers at the Theatres Royal Drury Lane and Covent Garden, &c., blunder most egregiously.

Bang!---crash!---bump! the furniture in

the rooms above seemed, like the renowned Baron Munchausen's wardrobe, to have gone raving mad.

Nothing is more disagreeable than doubt, so Mesmer hastily drew on that portion of the European costume which modern refinement so delights to allude to under every variety of misnomer — I mean his trousers, thrust his feet into his slippers and his arms into his dressing-gown which he hastily buttoned, and emerged from his chamber in order to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

The first thing he met with on his way upstairs to the next floor, where the aforesaid diabolical gymnastics or insane upholstery galoppades were apparently going on, was a large arm chair in a state of rapid locomotion, strongly encouraging the latter hypothesis, this was followed by sundry specimens of crockery, jugs, basins, ewers, soap-dishes, and other utilitarian contrivances.

By no little exertion of agility, the dauntless Biron managed to escape from all these dangers, and at length gained the landing in safety, where a scene exhibiting a remarkable mixture of the terrible and the ludicrous presented itself.——

In a shirt torn almost to ribbands, with flashing eyes, and face of a deep purple tint, stood a man of the middle height and very muscular proportions, before the door of a room nearly opposite to the staircase; over the balusters of which he was in the act of launching a towel-stand with every indication of the wildest fury. He then rushed into his room and instantly returned with a pair of boots and a looking-glass, which he would have served in the same manner had not Mesmer stepped up to him, and fixing his eyes calmly upon him, said in an easy, unembarrassed manner——

“ I would not throw the *glass* over, if I were you, because it might perhaps get broken ” ——

"Ah!" said the maniac, (for that such he was must have been evident at a glance) very true, I did not think of that."

"I wish you could tell me what time it is?" continued Biron, "I have left my watch below."

The maniac paused, he appeared to be trying to recollect, and two or three times made a dive with his hand into an imaginary waistcoat pocket, until evidently vexed at the unsuccessful result, he exclaimed impatiently,—

"I am sorry I can't tell you, sir, but excuse me, I am very busy, I have a great deal more work to get through this morning."

"Can I assist you?" said Mesmer, "I have nothing particular to engage my attention just now."

"Why," said the madman, "I think you might help me a little. Suppose you carry the things out of the room and I throw them over, as you bring them to me?"

"Well that would be a very good plan,"

said the Count, "but do not you think it would be better if we were to take out all the things first on the landing, and have one grand smash, eh?"

"Ah, that is a fine idea!" said the madman eagerly, and they entered the room together.

Meanwhile, from the doors of every chamber in the passage protruded the heads of the occupants, who, attracted by the noise, had not, however, ventured to interfere with the proceedings of the lunatic, whose savage violence filled them with dismay and terror.

But Biron feared neither madmen nor anything else in the heavens above or in the earth below; he would have shaken hands with the fiend Arimanes in his hall of fire, could he have found his way thither, would have slept with the calmness of an innocent maiden beneath a spreading tree, in the midnight forest, where desperate robbers congregate, and deeds of blood are planned, amid horrid mirth, or in the gloomy catacombs, where grisly spectres

stalk, and pallid gauze-like ghosts yell their unearthly glees !

“ Is it absolutely necessary, then, to throw all the furniture down stairs ?” enquired Biron, gravely.

“ Why, yes ;” replied the maniac glancing cautiously around him, “ I do not see how it can be avoided ; the fact is,” and he approached Mesmer, and whispered mysteriously in his ear—“ the fact is, that they are so thin, they will hide themselves almost anywhere—there is no driving them out at all—there they have been now, chiefly under the bed, for the last three months, coiled up, with their heads in their mouths—it’s a wonder they don’t get the stitch in their sides or the cramp—there they are—little skeletons, you know, all bones—bones !” and the maniac nodded with great emphasis and sagacity—“ one of them is Susan, that used to be at the ‘ Green Lion,’ in Fleet-street ; it is quite extraordinary how they can live, never eating

anything but dirty boots and feathers—quite unaccountable !”

Mesmer agreed with him that there was no accounting for it, and they proceeded to remove the chairs and other smaller articles of furniture, when the madman suddenly declared that he was dreadfully thirsty, and should die in precisely three minutes and three quarters if he were not instantly supplied with some pure spring water ; thereupon rushing out upon the landing, he vociferated loudly, “ water, water, water !” in tones of the most thrilling anxiety.

Mesmer took this opportunity to draw the key from the inside of the door unperceived by the maniac, who still continued his demand for “ water.”

At length the waiters, the boots, and several other people seeing that no more furniture was thrown down stairs, and that the general aspect of affairs was becoming less dangerous, ventured to approach the lunatic who was in a

few moments surrounded by men and women, each holding glasses, bottles, and jugs of water in their hands, which they proffered with great assiduity.

All were, however, angrily rejected by the maniac, who declared that although he had crossed the desert a great many times he had never been in a worse *caravanserai* before. "Where was the spring? he would go and drink the water from the well!"

"There is some really pure water here." said Biron pointing to the corner of the room; the madman left the door-way; in another instant the door was closed and locked on the outside; he was a prisoner.

At this satisfactory termination of the adventure, everybody loudly applauded our hero's presence of mind.

Upon making inquiries, it appeared that the unfortunate gentleman had arrived the evening before in a perfectly sane state of mind, and had supped and gone to bed in a very rational

and quiet manner. Who or what he was, nobody was able to say, so Mesmer ordered breakfast in the coffee-room, and returned to his chamber, in order to complete his toilette, whilst the other ladies and gentlemen (the former especially) much shocked at the *deshabbille* in which they confronted one another, hastened back to their chambers.

CHAPTER X.**THE BARGAIN.**

Wise men make good breakfasts. They regard the matutinal meal as a good builder does the foundation of a house, upon which a safe and lasting superstructure may be raised, therefore they make it solid, and of strong proportions.

Mesmer de Biron entertained profoundly philosophic views upon this important point, and although he did not, like the now everlastingly

damned caliph of Bagdad, the wicked necromancer Vathek, indulge in three hundred dishes at a sitting, yet was he in his way by no means a contemptible gourmand.

The prospect of subsequently putting into execution a scheme of super-eminently refined and ingenious rascality, added, on the present, occasion, a double zest to our noble hero's appetite.

Eating and drinking are functions of the utmost importance ; life, the most valuable of our possessions, depends, as every one must be aware, upon their due and proper exercise.

It appears to me that the influence of nutriment and its varieties, upon the mind has hitherto been very insufficiently investigated.

For my part, next to what a man *does* and *thinks*, I regard what he *eats* as of the most paramount consequence. I shall, therefore, give an abridged detail of Count Mesmer de

Biron's breakfast, without further preface or apology.

It consisted of five courses. The first course comprised coffee, rolls, toast, mutton chops, fried soles and deviled kidneys.

The second was composed of chocolate, cold fowls and game, preserves, and potted meats.

The third, of a *demi-bouteille* of champagne and three roasted chesnuts.

The fourth, of the morning papers; that is to say, Mesmer ran his eye over the columns of the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle*, and hung the *Post* over the back of a chair, by way of a fire-screen, thus for once actually making it useful in defiance of its decidedly anti-utilitarian idiosyncrasy.

The fifth and last course was represented by a splendid cigar, which Biron half smoked away, and threw the remaining portion at the nose of an old tom-cat who had strayed into the coffee-room.

Having accomplished this last feat with great satisfaction to himself personally, and the infinite annoyance of the poor persecuted quadruped, whose nose was most alarmingly scarified, he drew on his great coat, and prepared for a walk.

The morning was fine, but chilly, and our hero walked rapidly towards the street specified by the stranger at the café of the previous evening. Then having found the house in question, and seen at a glance that it far exceeded in value the sum mentioned by Cashall, he proceeded to knock and ring with considerable vehemence.

“Is Colonel Rossmill at home?” enquired Mesmer, who had ascertained the name from the Court Guide.

“Yes, sir,” said the footman.

“I wish to speak with him on business,” continued Biron.

“What name, sir?”

The Count gave his card, and in a few

minutes was ushered into a spacious and well furnished library.

A man of about eight and thirty, of a tall and majestic shape, arose as he entered, and bowing with great politeness, pointed to an easy chair of an inviting aspect, and requested Biron to be seated.

Mesmer complied, with a bow of equal politeness, and said —

“I believe I have the pleasure of speaking with Colonel Rossmill?”

“I am he,” replied the Colonel, “pray will you explain the object of your visit?”

But before proceeding further in this conversation, it may be as well briefly to describe the person of the last speaker, also, still more briefly the apartment wherein he spoke.

Colonel Rossmill, as already observed, was about eight and thirty years of age, his features were severely aquiline, his eyes black, large, and brilliantly keen; his hair was the hue of

jet, and a slight baldness made his naturally high forehead appear still more so. He was moreover a man of excellent family, great talent, not unknown to literary fame and much addicted to scientific pursuits.

His library was less amply furnished with books than with machines and models of various kinds; air-pumps, electrifying-machines, vials, and crucibles in endless variety; galvanic batteries, telescopes, and skeletons, with an immense variety of phrenological casts of such varied forms and sizes, that any one unacquainted with the subject, would scarcely have conceived it possible that one human cranium should so prodigiously differ from another.

“I have been informed,” said Biron, in reply to the colonel’s query, “that you have some intention of disposing of this house.”

“It is the case,” said Colonel Rossmill.

“I wish to purchase a house,” resumed Biron, “in this part of the town, and I think

that this would suit me. By my father's death I have been recently left in the possession of some property, and I wish to live in a way more suitable to my rank than my poor father, who had but one fault, avarice, which, I am sorry to say, he carried to a most unreasonable extent."

"I should think he must have had very large acquisitiveness," said the colonel.

"No doubt of it," replied Biron, "I was quite surprised at the fortune he left me, considering how secluded and penuriously we had lived."

"You have not a *cast* of his head, I suppose?" said the phrenologist.

"No," replied Mesmer.

"That is a great pity."

"It is indeed—I always thought phrenology a most deeply interesting study, and had I had the means, should have prosecuted it with great ardor; but during my father's life time this was utterly impracticable, now, however

as soon as I can get a house I shall resume it with increased zeal. Indeed, I have some idea of forming a sort of museum of casts, beginning at the lowest and least sagacious of quadrupeds ascending to the greatest and most intellectual of men.'

"An excellent plan!" exclaimed Colonel Roessmill, becoming every moment more prepossessed in favour of our hero, who knew so well how to touch the sympathetic chords of the human mind, and feigned so skilfully the warmest enthusiasm even for pursuits he in reality despised and detested, which however was by no means the case in the present instance.

"To each of these casts," continued he, "I would append the character of the person from whose head it was taken, and I conceive that in the teeth of such evidence few would be sufficiently bold to dispute the truth of this glorious science."

"One would fancy not," said the colonel "if we did not know from sad experience the

tremendous difficulties involved in the establishment of the simplest and most palpable truths."

"And yet," said Mesmer, "how many absurdities do the generality of mankind receive as indisputable facts, without requiring even the shadow of proof or testimony, merely because they were inculcated in youth, backed by the prejudice of education, or supported by the countenance of antiquity."

"The shield of unnumbered follies in every age!" rejoined Rossmill.

"True," said Biron, "and saves logic, which to those who have none at hand, is often monstrously convenient.—But to return to business—the house I mean."

And our designing hero affected to look at his watch as if his time were valuable in the highest degree, or he had some most important appointment in immediate prospect.

"Really I must apologise for my digression," said Colonel Rossmill.

“ Pray do nothing of the kind,” interrupted Biron, “ phrenology is quite my mania, and nothing would more delight me than to compare notes with one who has evidently dived so profoundly into the springs of the science ; but this morning I am unfortunately pressed for time.”

“ I am sure I should be most happy at any other time, if you would favor me with a call,” said Rossmill.

“ Nothing would give me greater pleasure,” responded Biron.

“ Well then, with regard to the house, the fact is this ; I have no family, my wife has been dead for some years, and I find this house much more spacious than I require, besides being very expensive, and owing to the extraordinary conduct of a brother-in-law of mine, I have lately had very heavy demands upon my purse—you see that cast—remark the large *benevolence*—the tremendous *destruc- iveness*, and the total want of *acq uisitiveness*.”

"In truth a most unfortunate combination!" exclaimed Mesmer.

"Unfortunate indeed, but see, worse than all, the very moderate *conscientiousness*."

The 'man without a conscience' smiled sardonically as the colonel uttered these last words, and took from them a useful hint for his after conduct.

"That cast is my poor brother-in-law's," continued Rossmill almost mournfully, "how can I blame him for actions, which, with organs thus developed, are, according to my convictions, inevitable."

"How, indeed," said Mesmer.

"Well," continued the colonel, "for the reasons I have stated, I wish to sell the lease of the house, which has still some eighty years to run, but unfortunately my title to the property is disputed."

Here Colonel Rossmill entered into details, which would prove but little interesting to the reader, and as they are quite irrelevant to this

history, I shall not here enter into their discussion.

“It appears to me,” said Biron, when the phrenologist had concluded his statement, “that your title is quite valid notwithstanding all you have stated——”

“But I must forewarn you,” said the colonel, who like Brutus was ‘an honorable man,’ that my solicitor, Mr. Monville, expresses great doubt upon the subject, and indeed, the dread of a lawsuit, which above all things I hold in unqualified abhorrence, was an additional reason for my disposal of the house.”

“Nevertheless,” said Mesmer, “I am quite willing to purchase the property, though of course the contingency of a lawsuit must in some degree influence its value.”

“Well,” said Rossmill, “as there is this danger impending, and ready money is an object to me at the present moment——”

“I see,” said Mesmer, smiling, “that your *secretiveness* is very small.”

"Very, there is my head," replied Ross-mill, pointing to one of the casts; the fact is I never could keep a secret, and many are the misfortunes which my frankness has brought upon myself and others—but to resume—my solicitor advises me to part with this house at any price — even for twelve hundred pounds."

Luckily," said the wily count, "I have just about that sum at immediate command, so that if you are willing to close the bargain and will give me your solicitor's address the matter may be arranged at once. I will give my solicitor his instructions regarding the purchase without delay."

"Be it so then," said the colonel, who being really in great want of money, was much pleased with our hero's promptness, and taking a pen he proceeded to write upon a card the following address,——

MR. MONVILLE,

—— STREET, BEDFORD ROW.

“Then I will wish you good morning,” said Mesmer, shaking hands with Colonel Rossmill in the most friendly manner.

“Good morning, and remember, if you feel inclined to inspect my collection of skulls and casts, I shall be most happy to explain their histories.”

“Be assured that I shall speedily avail myself of your kind offer.”

“Well then, Count de Biron, I will not detain you any longer from your appointment.”

“Good morning.”——

But at the moment Mesmer was about to effect his exit the door opened—and the beauty of the Haymarket stood before him!

CHAPTER XI.**THE INVITATION.**

“My niece, Miss Augusta Merlmore—
Count de Biron,” said Colonel Rossmill.

Mesmer bowed, and drew back, for Miss Merlmore's sudden entrance had almost brought them into bodily contact. But the fair girl, who could not have yet counted twenty summers, blushed and shrunk embarrassed beneath the glance of fierce admiration which flashed from the dark eyes of the stranger.

“Surely I have the devil’s luck as well as my own!” thought Biron exultingly, “but it will not do to leave this house without pursuing the advantage fate so obligingly throws in my way---fires of heaven! how exquisitely lovely are her features, what divine grace in her form!”

“Excuse my troubling you,” said Mesmer aloud, “but as I see,”---here he looked at his gold Geneva watch, which by the way he had forgotten to wind up, on the previous evening---“as I see that I am too late for my appointment, I should, if it would not be considered intrusive, very much like to see the drawing rooms---they must be fine rooms, to judge by the front of the house---”

“They *are* fine apartments, Count de Biron,” said the colonel, “and were newly papered and decorated scarcely a year ago, I should like you to see them, pray step upstairs at once.”

And Rossmill himself led the way to the *belle étage* of the mansion,

"I wonder," thought Biron, "whether she is living with the colonel, or merely here on a visit—Augusta Merlmore, what a delightful name—beautiful Augusta!"

"The size of the rooms exceed my anticipations;" said he again aloud, "they are truly princely."

"How do you like the paper?"

"Oh! admirable, it is *couleur de rose*, like the bright hopes and ardent feelings of our youth, before they are stained more darkly by experience and the rude contact of the world."

"But you are yet young to have arrived at so an undesirable a consummation?" said Colonel Rossmill.

"I was not alluding to myself," said Mesmer with a sigh, that left much to be inferred. "Hitherto I have led a life of seclusion, little consonant to with my disposition, so that my experience is rather of books than of men."

"Those arched folding doors with the Corinthian columns on either side were an im-

provement of my own," said the colonel, "what do you think of them?"

"Nothing could more efficiently testify to your taste, they are perfectly classic—but I see you have some fine pictures here—Ah! that water-colour sketch is inimitable, it is one of Prout's I presume?"

"Then I am afraid you must resign your pretensions as a connoisseur. It is one of my niece Augusta's," said Rossmill, evidently much pleased.

"Is it possible?"

Then turning to Miss Merlmore, our hero said in that deep, soft tone which gave such a fascination to his utterance,——

"I will not say more of your work, what I *have* said, you must believe my genuine opinion; were I now to add the praises which hover on my tongue, you might imagine that I wished to flatter—a vice of all others I most intensely deprecate!"

Augusta blushed. Again she could not

help confessing that he was handsome; there was she imagined an unaffected grace, a youthful enthusiasm in his manners, which, in contradistinction to the coxcombry of so many of the young men she was accustomed to meet, appeared irresistibly engaging.

"Then his name, thus ran her secret thoughts, how poetical, how mystic, how aristocratic--Count de Biron--I wonder what is *his* christian name!"

"So she is his niece," thought Mesmer; Colonel Rossmill seems destined to be useful to me in more ways than one."

"Will you take a little lunch with us?" said the Colonel, as much pleased as Augusta at the count's admiration of her painting, "we are just about to have some."

"With pleasure," said Biron; "to be candid, as I have missed the appointment I alluded to, and am engaged to dine with my friend Sir John Templeton, at seven, I positively did not know what to do with myself in the

interim. I know so few people in London, for my poor father, whose avarice almost amounted to monomania, avoided all society but that of traders and speculators, to which I felt an equally powerful aversion. Hitherto, absorbed in my studies, I have never felt the want of friends so much as at the present moment, when their deficiency almost neutralizes my other advantages as to property and rank."

"By the way," said Colonel Rossmill, "your family is of course French, to judge by the spelling of your name and your title."

"No, the countship is Russian, and was given to my grandfather for some secret services of a diplomatic nature---I never knew the precise particulars---my father altogether dropped the title, not having originally the means to support it, and afterwards from regarding it as a bar to his favourite pursuits, but all the papers were preserved---and I imagine no one

can find fault with me for resuming my just right."

"Far from blaming you, I admire your spirit."

"Will you take a pinch of snuff?" said Biron, "this box was given to the first *Count de Biron* from the Emperor's own hand at *St. Petersburg* --- it is of platinum lined with gold."

"The workmanship is admirable," said Colonel Rossmill.

"Pray allow me to look at it," said Augusta.

Mesmer felt, when she returned it, that it had now acquired a value independent of its intrinsic worth, nay, that had it really been the donation of the august personage he represented, it could not have been prized more highly than since it had been honored by the touch of *Augusta Merlmore's* hand.

"Then you are of English family?" said

the colonel, whose phrenological organism rendered him very inquisitive.

“Undoubtedly, I am a true John Bull; indeed, from the researches I have made, I entertain little doubt but that the Biron and Byron families originally sprung from the same stock---the spelling of so many names has been corrupted since the conquest.”

“Well I am glad you are an Englishman, let me feel your head.” And the enthusiastic phrenologist forthwith commenced operations.

“Humph! moderate adhesiveness, amative-ness and philoprogenitiveness *very large*.”

Miss Merlmore blushed and smiled at her uncle's scientific enthusiasm.

“Stay,” said Mesmer “you are trespassing on forbidden ground; what! do you imagine that I, a confirmed believer in phrenology, am willing to permit any one to acquaint themselves with all the defects and weaknesses in my character. No, no! my maxim in science is — experimentalise upon others but

content *yourself* with the wisdom to be derived from their deductions."

"I beg your pardon," said the colonel laughing, "you are quite right, however I have gathered something from my attack upon your cranium—you will make a good friend, and—a still better lover!"

"I am glad to hear you say so," exclaimed Biron gaily; at the same time he rejoiced that he had stopped the colonel in time to prevent him from weighing his deficiency in the development of the moral organs, of which he was fully conscious, and which, although rather a merit in his own estimation, he was well aware was looked upon as precisely the reverse by the generality of the world.

At length Mesmer rose to depart, promising to call at once upon his solicitor, and speak to him about the purchase of the house.

"Really Colonel Rossmill," said he with well assumed *naiveté*, as he shook him by

the hand, "I could almost fancy we were old friends of many years' standing. I shall not forget your promise about the casts."

"I can assure you, Count, that I should be delighted to cultivate your acquaintance; by the bye, we have a few friends coming on Wednesday evening, and if you are not better engaged--"

"I *am* engaged," replied Biron, "but not *better* engaged, so I shall send an excuse to old Mrs. Sinclair as soon as I get home. She is a distant relation of mine and very rich, but her parties are dull and formal, so *a revoir*!"

He bowed gracefully to Augusta and was gone.

"Well, Augusta," said Colonel Rossmill, "I must say I think this young Count de Biron one of the most agreeable young men I have encountered for some time past, and he certainly has a fine manly bearing and most

expressive eyes, though his features are almost effeminate."

"Oh ! he is very handsome !" interrupted the unsophisticated Augusta.

"He seemed to think *you* so at any rate, to judge by his looks said the Colonel smiling.

"Do you think so ?"

"Think so ! I have studied human nature, physiognomy in particular, and could not be mistaken in the pleasure which flashed from those soft dark eyes of his, when he accepted the invitation ; they rested upon you."

"Well, who knows but I may be the Countess de Biron some day or other," said Augusta laughingly.

"He is about to buy this house, and form an establishment ; from the hints, too, which he quite unintentionally let drop, he must be possessed of considerable property," rejoined the Colonel in a meditative tone.

"Why what a speculative creature you

are !” exclaimed his niece playfully, and then stopping abruptly with a look which encouraged him to proceed.”

“ I think he would make you a very good match,” resumed uncle Rossmill.

“ Don’t you think he is too young to marry ?” said Augusta.

“ Too young ! why should he—too young—I suppose he is at least two or three and twenty.”

“ Oh, I only *thought*—you know you told my brother Theodore, who is nearly *five* and twenty, that he was too young to *dream* of such a thing !”

“ So I did, you little pup, but then he wanted to marry a girl without a farthing, having next to nothing himself—a young nobleman of independent fortune is quite another affair.”

“ Ah ! I see, ‘ men, not measures’ as Mr. D’Israeli virtuously says.”

“ How do you know what he says ?”

“ I read the debates in the Times.”

"Girls should not read the newspapers."

"And why not?"

"Because they are full of things, they ought to know nothing about."

"That which is evil for a girl to know is evil for a man," said Augusta.

"Nonsense, child; men are compelled to know much that is evil, in order to protect themselves against it; women are made to be protected by men."

"And oppressed."

"You little termagant, I will not go with you to the opera to-morrow, if you attack me with any of your rights of women and emancipating theories."

"Then I'll set Mrs. W—— at you on Wednesday."

"No, no; anything but that! By the way what a delightful frankness and total absence of affectation there is in the young Count's manner."

"To a degree—he quizzed me through his

opera glass for a full hour without interruption, last night, at the theatre."

"Indeed? Where was he seated?"

"In one of the stalls."

"That accounts for your looking so earnestly towards the orchestra, as I imagined."

"Nonsense, uncle—by the way, Prince Aurelius is coming on Wednesday; how admirably he will agree with Count de Biron."

"He will; and do you know the Count's name—his christian name, I mean?"

"No; what is it? George, after the great bard?"*

"No; a most extraordinary name; you would never guess it."

* "'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen called Thomson and nineteen called Smith.
Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson—all the rest
Had been called '*Jemmy*,' after the great bard."

DON JUAN.

“Then I will not try, so I give it up at once.”

“His name is MESMER—Count Mesmer de Biron.”

“And Prince Aurelius is such a mesmerist ; oh, how charming !—and does the Count mesmerise ?”

“I do not know ; but he is a great student of Phrenology.”

“Then if he is not so already, he can soon learn.”

“Yes, and you will become his patient at once, that he may lose no time.”

“Of course, and go off into the most beautiful trance, and see visions, and prophesy the day he will be married on, and I do not know what besides,” cried the lively Augusta throwing back her long dark ringlets, and laughing in a most bewitching manner.

“Well, we shall see ; I must now go and write some letters.”

“And I shall go to the piano.”

Augusta seated herself at the instrument, and sang, in a beautiful contralto voice, a popular German air, the *refrain* whereof ran as follows :—

“ Thine is my heart, thine is my heart !
And shall be thine for ever !”

AUGUSTA

CHAPTER XII.**THE ATTORNEY.**

WITH a gait proudly triumphant, the designing Mesmer walked for some yards from the door of Colonel Rossmill, in a sort of ecstasy of self satisfaction, his countenance displaying a half repressed smile, which would have done credit to the most subtle of diplomatists.

“ Yes,” thought he, “ my friend Lucifer—I always thought him the greatest hero ever

conceived by the imagination of a poet—Satan was right—

“ Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.”

Better to be the prince of liars, the deceiver of all deceivers, the arch impostor of one's age, than to plod on in dark and monotonous obscurity, without excitement, hope, or pleasure, like a stupid worm. Impostor ! I glory in the term which marks me the superior in art and intellect to the race I dupe and—despise. I triumph in the impenetrable veil which wraps my being, whilst at a glance I pierce the deceit and hypocrisy of the creatures I mingle with. I laugh to see them play their petty cards so insanelly. ‘ The world's a stage,’ and I am to myself at once the hero and the audience. Like the invisible prince in the story book, I see unseen—I mark unnoticed, and, unrestrained by prejudice or country, relations or profession, part or sympathy with

human follies, I roam the earth a free and fearless spirit quaffing the cup of bliss wherever offered, indifferent to the opinion of mankind, and dally realising the Spartan motto, "Eat drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die!"

Turning the corner of a street, a cab-stand burst upon our hero's view; he hailed the foremost of the row, and sprang with the agility of his age into the ubiquitous vehicle.

"Drive me to ——— street, Bedford Row, and quickly!" said Biron; and away they rattled over the stones.

There is, perhaps, no time or place better adapted to the rosy dreams and soft meditations of love than the solitary occupation of a conveyance upon wheels. The rumbling of the machinery, the clatter of the horses' hoofs, the occasional jolts, and above all the rapidity of motion vehemently assist the exertions of the imagination—indeed I have heard of a po-

pular author whose inventive faculties, without this peculiar stimulus, are almost totally dormant, his ideas requiring, as it were, to be jerked and shaken out of his brain like pepper from a cruet ; not that they resemble pepper in any other respect ; still as that indispensable spice dots the surface of a plate of cucumber, so do these mis-begotten ideas serve to chequer the pages of a magazine and the thoughts of the unthinking subscribers.

The fancy of Biron during his progress in the cab was incessantly occupied with the image of the beautiful Augusta Rossmill ; he pictured her in every attitude ; feature by feature, he recapitulated her charms, and he swore—he was addicted to that impious practice—he swore by the throne of the Persian devil, Eblis, that she should be his ere many months were gone, and that still fewer days should fade before he pressed impassioned kisses on her rosy lips, and forced her to confess his love returned ! He swore, and the

cab suddenly coming to a stop at the door of Mr. Monville's residence, aroused him from his delightful reflections.

"Are you going to stop long, sir?" said the cabman, before whose imagination danced visionary pots of porter at the corner.

"We have stopped short already," replied Mesmer; "wait for me here."

He entered the house, and knocked at a door on which "Clerk's Office," was inscribed in large and legible characters.

The door opened, and an elderly man in a threadbare suit of black, with a bald head, and a pen in his mouth, made his appearance.

"Is Mr. Monville at home?" enquired Mesmer.

"Yes, sir, he is," replied the bald-headed clerk in measured accents.

"Can I see him?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid not, responded the clerk, shaking his head portentously; he is very particularly engaged with several gen-

tlemen, on very particular business, and gave particular orders that he was not to be disturbed on any account, however particular the business might be."

"My business is more particular than theirs, and I am more particular than any body else in London, said Mesmer coolly, so take up my card, and say I must see him at once, on business most particularly particular."

The bald clerk stared for a moment at the audacious client; concluding, however, from his dress and manner that he must be a personage of great importance, he took the card, and telling a boy in the office with some confusion to "give 'my lordship' a chair," he disappeared with the message.

In a few moments he reappeared and requested 'my lordship' to walk up stairs and take the first door to the left, in which apartment he found Mr. Monville, the man he had seen at the Café de l'Europe the night before

seated alone in a high-backed chair with a table covered with papers tied up in red tape after the manner of all sublunary attorneys and solicitors.

What had become of the particular clients was hard to conjecture ; there were no back stairs by which they could have escaped ; the windows were rather too high for a leap, not to weigh the improbability of such a wonderful course of proceeding, they could scarcely have retreated to the iron safe in the corner ; in fine, Biron was driven to the inevitable conclusion that they were mere creatures of the imagination of the bald-headed clerk, created by that gentleman's exuberant fantasy with the view of enhancing the importance of himself, his master, and his master's overwhelming accumulation of legal business.

" You do not know me ?" said de Biron.

" I certainly have not that pleasure," replied Mr. Monville in the most honied accents.

"Then I have the advantage of you," said Mesmer quietly.

The attorney smiled as much as to say that that was no very easy matter.

"Really," he began, "I do not remember where I have had the felicity."

"Of course not; it was last night, at the Café de l'Europe."

"I did not see you."

"No, I dare say not; but *I* saw, and besides that *heard*, I may say *overheard* you."

"Indeed, sir, and pray what connection has that extraordinary fact, which, to say the least—"

"The less said the better," interrupted Biron perceiving that Mr. Monville was growing red in the face and waxing irate with alarming rapidity, a climax he wished to avoid, "I overheard nothing that will not be to your credit."

The last word was uttered in a tone

which threw a veil of ambiguity over its meaning, by no means displeasing to Mr. Monville.

"Pray proceed," said that sagacious person with increasing politeness.

"Briefly then," said Mesmer, "I have determined to buy Colonel Rossmill's house ; it will precisely suit me, and is, besides, as you are aware, a very good investment for one's money."

Monville stared.

The placid, gentlemanlike assurance of our hero was a shade beyond his experience ; Biron's superior rascality confounded him, and checked the familiarity he might otherwise have ventured upon.

"I have seen Colonel Rossmill," continued Biron, "I did not think it necessary to allude to your jesting remarks to your friend Mr. Cashall, which I quite unintentionally overheard ; you will lose no time in getting the

affair settled with my solicitor, I mean create no unnecessary delay."

"Certainly not," said Monville, somewhat shocked at finding his professional character in the power of a man evidently disposed to make the most of every piece of information, no matter how obtained.

"Then I wish you a good morning," said the Count, with an amiable smile; and Biron forthwith quitted the apartment.

"I am glad he is gone", thought the lawyer, "there's something devilish about those dark eyes of his; that pretty face and musical voice contrast uncomfortably with such infernal cunning and hypocrisy. I am no better or honestier than many myself; but this man seems to swindle *con amore*—he's a d——d scoundrel, I think!"

This was something like the case of the omnibus conductor, who, on a passenger alighting one evening, called out to the driver—

"All right, Jack, it's half a sovereign; go on!"

After a little while he angrily exclaimed—

"I say, Jack, it's all wrong, that d——d feller has *cheated* us—it's *half a farthing*!"

CHAPTER XIII.

DINNER IN LEICESTER-SQUARE.—COINCIDENCE,

“Now for my dinner with Sir John Templeton,” thought Mesmer, “I wonder whether there is such a title in the baronetage—no matter—drive to the Hotel de Provence, Leicester-Square,” added he aloud for the benefit of the cabman, who sprang to his box, lashed his rosinante, and set off at a canter.

Whenever by any chance I find myself

in Leicester-Square I cannot help fancying myself on the Continent, and, should I take it into my head to dine at one of the restaurants with which it abounds, talk French to the *garçon* as perseveringly as if it were really necessary.

Mesmer de Biron could not well fancy himself on the Continent, never having since his birth been more than ten miles from the Bank of England; but he knew Leicester-Square well, as indeed he was tolerably versed in the geography of every portion of the modern Babylon, and he knew that excellent French cooks not unfrequently lurked within the kitchens of those dingy, inhospitable looking buildings.

A strange place is Leicester-Square---now for a description *a la Dickens*. A strange place is Leicester-Square, with its quaint lamp-posts, and its wondrous exhibitions and places of amusements, shooting-galleries and gymnastic-rooms, not otherwise easily attain-

able. Its policemen, and its applewomen, and grotesque juveniles in their ragged habiliments. Mustachood Frenchmen and Germans with interminable pipes, there find a habitation; bill-stickers are rarely at a loss for paling on which to paste their monstrous placards. Oh! a nice, out of the way, odd sort of place is the Square of Leicester!

The cab stopped at the Hotel de Provence, which, by the way, is a corner house. The words "*Restaurant au Premier*," appeared above the door, and after ascending with some difficulty, owing to the darkness pervading, a staircase with as many turns and windings as a moderate sized boa constrictor, our hero found himself in the coffee-room.

This was a long, wedge-shaped apartment, well furnished with looking-glasses and tables covered with snow white cloths and the other necessary preparations for dining.

Owing, however, to the peculiar shape of the room, the tables had been made of a con-

formation equally peculiar, until at the narrowest extremity thereof they absolutely verged on the triangular.

The only human occupant of the room was a gentleman with redundant black hair, and a rough great coat, who sat in a luxurious attitude, rocking himself in a chair opposite the fire, with his feet on the fender, and his hands buried in the depths of his pockets.

I said the only *human* occupant, because there was also a large mastiff seated opposite to the fire, who occasionally rubbed his nose against his master's great coat in a grave and meditative manner, as if to shew his sympathy in the feelings with which he instinctively felt the mind of his master to be occupied. Perhaps there is no epoch of the day at which men and dogs so nearly agree in their mode of thinking, as during the hour preceding the appearance of dinner.

Mesmer ordered a good refection, consisting of eleven dishes, which unusual extravagance

caused the waiter to regard him with an air of gradually deepening respect, amounting almost to veneration, when Biron furthermore directed him to bring Sherry, Hock, Champagne, and Chateau Margeaux, with the dessert.

Even the gentleman in the rough great coat at the fire leant back and looked over his head backwards at our hero, whose voracity excited his admiration as well as that of his four-footed companion, who thought it advisable to get upon terms of friendship with a man who had ordered so extensive a dinner, and accordingly introduced himself to Mesmer's notice, by brushing against his legs and adorning them with sundry depositions of mud from his paws.

"Growler! come here, you rascal," said the owner of the offending animal with some sternness in his tone, "I am afraid he has covered you with mud."

"Oh, never mind," said the Count smiling ;

I am not going to a rendezvous this evening, so it is of little consequence ; but what a splendid animal it is ; I do not remember that I have ever seen a larger."

"Nor I," replied the stranger, who was a man of about forty, with a handsome, open countenance, dark brilliant eyes, and whiskers completely encircling his countenance, until beneath his chin they mingled with a long pair of black moustaches and a beard of sable luxuriance, "except, by the way, his twin brother, which I gave to my brother-in-law, Colonel Rossmill."

"Colonel Rossmill !" exclaimed Biron, why, I have not long since left his house, which, by the way, I am about to purchase."

"Did you see his niece ?" enquired the stranger.

"See her !" cried Biron enthusiastically, "Yes ! I saw the ideal of all that is fascinating and lovely in woman ; if etiquette per-

mitted it, I would lay myself and fortune at her feet to-morrow, and make her the Countess de Biron the day after."

"Stop, I entreat you, my dear sir, said the stranger, laughing—*I am her father.*"

"Indeed," said Biron, affecting to start in great confusion, "pray excuse the freedom I have taken with the name of your daughter, of course I had no idea——"

"Not another word, my dear sir,"! said Mr. Merlmore, laughing, "of course I shall consider your words as unsaid."

"By no means," said Mesmer frankly, I always say what I mean, and I do not hesitate to tell you, whatever may be the result, that the hope of meeting your daughter has been, since some four and twenty hours the brightest object of my existence. I dare say you think me a very extraordinary uncereemonious personage, but to say the truth I never could assume the cold calculating affectation of the man of fashion, and rather than take the

trouble to play the hypocrite, I endure all the evils which my careless openness entails upon me."

"It must lead you into strange adventures sometimes," said Mr. Merlmore, who already began to feel the serpentine fascination exercised by our hero upon all who came in contact with him."

"Sometimes," replied Mesmer, "yet in the long run I find it succeeds---much I suppose on the principle that the man who takes dummy at whist wins the game of his opponents."

"Well this is an adventure," said Merlmore, "and allow me to add, as far as I am concerned, a pleasant one. I hate solitude, and of all things I detest dining alone.--A friend was to have met me here, but he seems to have forgotten his engagement, at any rate we may as well dine together."

"With pleasure," said Biron. "I quite agree with you as to solitude, which even the

best of dinners can scarcely render agreeable—and strange to say I too have been disappointed in a meeting.”

“ Here comes the soup,” said Merlmore.

“ My acquaintance with your brother-in-law is of very recent date, by the way,” said Biron, as soon as they were seated; and he proceeded to detail the particulars of his visit, as also the fact of his recognizing in Augusta the fair one who had so fascinated him at the theatre.

“ A most romantic conjunction of circumstances!” said Merlmore — “are you a fatalist, by the bye?”

“ No,” said Mesmer, “I am not.”

“ Perhaps you dislike the term fatalist and prefer that of necessarian.”

“ No,” said Biron, “I am not a necessarian.”

“ You imagine, perhaps, that such a doctrine is destructive of religion.”

“ Doubtless it *must* be so.”

"Pardon me," said Merlmore, "I should not have spoken so freely—but I assure you I never wish to offend the religious prejudices—opinions I mean of anybody."

"You cannot offend mine," said Mesmer, "*I have none.*"

"Oh!" said Merlmore, a little surprised at the ultra candid admission, "then what have you to oppose to necessarianism, you surely do not mean to say that anything can happen without a cause."

"I cannot tell—certainly not in the material world with which we are acquainted, but I believe in the supremacy of mind over matter and in the creative powers of the mind."

"Do you mean that the mind can create from nothing?"

"Perhaps—but do not try to dissuade me from my free will. I have made up my mind that my being is *not* a machine, in which case it would not be worth having, nor will I yield

to all the arguments in existence, or yet to be brought into existence the volition I momentarily exercise."

"You fancy you exercise it, but in reality it is equally the slave of circumstance, after all, truth is a matter of some importance."

"Is it?"

"It is the object of all speculative philosophy—but you substitute imagination for reason."

"I prefer it."

"On what grounds?"

"It affords me greater pleasure."

"But, my dear sir, after all one can but believe what one is convinced of."

"I am convinced."

"But how *can* you be convinced in the teeth of all sound logic."

"I do not believe in the existence of sound logic."

"You are enough to drive a man mad--"

"Suppose logic leads to a false conclu-

“Then it is not sound.”

“So say I—now you allow that space is infinitely divisible — how then is motion or indeed time possible?”

“The old syllogism?” *

* It is barely possible that some of my fair readers may be unacquainted with Zeuo's two celebrated puzzles. The one affirms that motion is impossible, because as soon as you had covered half a certain distance, there would yet remain *half*, when you had covered *that half*, *still* half of the space would remain, and so on ad infinitum. The other supposes a race between Achilles and a tortoise, the latter to have a mile's start. Now, when Achilles reached the end of the mile, the tortoise would have progressed a short distance; by the time Achilles arrived at the end of that distance it would have got a little farther, and so again to all eternity. Diogenes rose and *walked* to disprove it, but the proof was no better than a knock on the head is of the existence of matter; as an imaginary knock, in sleep for instance, would convey the same sensation. We have never seen these puzzling questions answered, though many have fancied they have done so. But this is not the place to discuss the laws of motion, nor would our readers' patience suffer such digression.

“ Old — but not disproved, however, to shew that the doctrine of necessity is a bad one—See what this discussion has brought us—three cold dishes !”

A pause ensued ; devoted to the discussion of the well-dressed viands, and the argument was resumed with unabated vigour as the claret and dessert made their appearance.

“ The doctrine of necessity is degrading,” said Biron

“ But true, nevertheless,” said Merimore.

“ But by willing or imagining a thing, we may often cause it.”

“ Yes, but there must be a cause which led to our imagining or willing.”

“ I can imagine a thing that never existed, for instance a Bengal tiger in top boots walk-upon a house-top ?”

“ You merely combine what you have actually witnessed under other circumstances.”

“ Then you allow that the mind *has* a power of combination, and you are doubtless

acquainted with the rule of Geometrical progression."

"What then?"

"The creative or combining powers of the mind are without limits."

"Granted, but there must always be a cause for this combining or creating

"I have but to wish or resolve to do so."

"That wish or resolve cannot exist without an antecedent cause — indeed would any one undertake the task, we might doubtless trace, through the whole life of an individual from the earliest impressions at, or even before birth, to his dying day, the inevitable, result of causes, over which he had no more controul than I over the universe."

"Then why exert oneself, why not sit down quietly and take our chance of good or evil?"

"Why not? — because causes already in existence, our circumstances, necessities, in-

clinations, determine otherwise; a man feels hungry because he requires food—he seeks food because he is hungry.”

“ But suppose he does not seek it?”

“ He starves; his obstinate opposition to a law of nature costs him his life, yet this obstinacy must have had a cause.”

“ For instance an argument like the present.”

“ Precisely.”

Biron now affected to remain for some minutes in a deep reverie, as if musing over a philosophy to which in his heart he had long sincerely subscribed, but which he had chosen either from whim or self interest, or some other ‘ *cause* over which he had no controul ’ to dispute and impugn; then suddenly seizing the hand of the necessarian, he said with a frank ingenuousness irresistibly prepossessing—

“ You have convinced me! how could I be so blind as to deny for an instant the truth of a system so rational and self evident!”

Merlmore looked delighted, a convert gained after a hard struggle is a great triumph to philosophic vanity.

“ And now let us have some supper,” said the ‘ man *without a conscience.*’

CHAPTER XIV.

USEFUL HINTS.

THE moment Mr. Merlmore had alluded to Colonel Rosemill's niece, Biron with intuitive sagacity suspected the truth. He had a keen eye for family likenesses, or as Colonel Rosemill would have expressed himself, 'very large comparison,' and he observed instantaneously an affinity between the eyes and forehead of the stranger in the coffee-room, and the beautiful Augusta Merlmore.

In all Mesmer's sayings and doings, there was a strange mixture of passionate impulse and unfathomable cunning, of candid truth and desperate falsehood; and this it was which enabled him to act his assumed character so perfectly as to evade even the shadow of suspicion. He was so young too and so beautiful, that it would have appeared a positive sin to have suspected him of hypocrisy. The only feature in which his true character was at all evident, was his mouth which though beautifully chiselled as that of the Apollo, had a peculiar sarcastic curl more or less developed at various times; and even this was concealed by his moustache from the scrutiny of the observant.

"You are not in the army, Count, I suppose?" said Merlmore growing more and more intimate under the influence of the wine.

"Allah forbid!" exclaimed Biron; "I am not a younger brother---and who but younger brothers would rush into that refuge for the

destitute? No! I am free as the mountain breeze, 'lord of myself that heritage of woe,' I live for pleasure, and I bank at Coutts's."

"Doubtless the most agreeable mode of life; somewhat similar to the course I pursued, and once lost thirty thousand pounds by."

"How so?"

"Why, a rich old uncle of mine, having no children, left sixty thousand pounds between my brother and my daughter, saying that the reason he left it to her, instead of me was, that I was not fit to be trusted with ready money."

"An old cormorant!"

"Yes, it was too bad; and to prove that my brother was still less fit to be trusted, he first lost all his fortune by an absurd speculation, and then went mad. I was only six-and-twenty at the time my uncle died, and just married and a father, so that some allowances might have been made, especially as

the allowance made me by *my* father was so confoundedly scanty."

"You had no profession, then?"

"Oh, yes; I was to have been a lawyer, and was, in fact, called to the bar; but as I never got a brief, I might as well have let it alone and saved, or even spent the money wasted on my noviciate."

"What say you to some cigars?"

"My mania—I have been living abroad for some years past—suppose we adjourn to a smoking locale."

Accordingly, having paid their bill, they put on their hats, and departed.

"Are you living in London, by the way?" said Mesmer.

"I purpose doing so, and have, in fact, come up to make arrangements for the reception of my family; I only arrived last night, and am staying at Green's Hotel."

"And I at Pink's," said Biron.

“ Can you come and breakfast with me to-morrow ?”

“ At what hour ?”

“ Eleven. precisely.”

“ I will be as punctual as a tax-gatherer.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE WAITER'S TALE.

ON reaching home at a remarkably early hour, considering his youth and temperament, the noble count proceeded to order a bottle of soda water and sherry, which in due time made their appearance in the hands of an attendant spirit of the place, *vulgo* a waiter, in whose countenance was very evidently to be traced a strong disposition to communicate some fact or facts of the utmost interest and impor-

tance. He only wanted to be encouraged in order, like the boa constrictor, to unfold his tale.

Biron perceiving this, remarked that it was somewhat chilly in a sort of half soliloquizing tone, and looked in the direction of the waiter.

"Yes, sir," said that worthy, "it is reether chilly, as you say, sir; we've bin in 'ot water enough though, since this morning."

"Indeed; why, what has been the matter?"

"Ah, sir, the mad gentleman in No. 14, has bin a-kicking hup such a dust. You hadn't bin gone long, afore he calls out through the key 'ole in the most insiniwatin' tones—'Let me out, if you please, my good people; the fit's over now, and won't come on again for I don't know how long.'"

"Won't it," says hi, "catch us letting you get another smash at the blessed furnitur!"

"I assure you, upon my soul, says 'e, "I ain't a-goin' to start hany new games only get me something to heat in another room, and I'll be as docile as a domesticated crocodile."

"Vell sir," says hi, if master likes to let you hout, 'e may; but may I be strangled with a napkin afore I hunlocks that ere door without 'is leave."

"Well," said Mesmer with some impatience, and did you let him out?"

"Tell you di-rectly sir."

"Go," says 'e, "go and hask your master to come 'ere."

"Werry well," says I, so I vent and fetched master; then the lunatic, sir, stuffs him up with periodical fits, and I don't know what hall, and master hunlocks the door and lets 'im out.

"Vell, sir, hout 'e comes dressed all reglar, except his veskit, wot was put on hupside

down, and a grey worsted stocking which was put on by way of a neck-cloth, all vich, his coat bein' buttoned hup to his chin, didn't becum visible until arterwards."

"Sad thing these here fits," says 'e to master as cool as a pickled cowcumber, "I dare say you think as I'm mad?"

"Why, *reely*," says master, "I don't wish to hoffend you, but you knocked the chairs about in a manner no indiwidigull in 'is respectable senses would have dreamed of."

"They shall all be paid for," says the lunatic, "there's my card, Guy Merlmore!" and he looked, sir, as hif 'e expected we wos to tumble down on our knees with weneration at the name.

"Merlmore!" said Biron in astonishment.

"Yes, sir, that was the name, and there's the card down stairs a-sticking in the frame of the looking-glass—p'raps, sir, you know some of his friends?"

"I do," said Biron, "how strange!— but proceed—"

"Vell, sir," continued the waiter.

"But it is *not* well," said Mesmer, vexed at the fellow's prolixity, "go on."

"Vell, sir," resumed the imperturbable *garçon*, "he, that is, sir, the lunatic looks at master with a most melloncly expression, and says, 'it's werry sad these attacks of hintermittent delirium, aint they?'" and at last he *gammons* him into the belief that he was no more mad than me, sir! Then sir, he orders a dinner, like hany rational Christian, and sits quite quiet till it was ready, as cunning as a fox, making believe that he was reading the paper.

"Vell, sir, I only left the room for two minutes, while he was dining, and when I come back, there was the roast beef and the vegetables in the coal-scuttle, and the madman sitting with his feet in the soup tureen, call-

ing out for boiled Champagne and pickled cocoa nuts. Hi rushes out, frightened out of my wits ; he rushes after me into the room opposite, which luckily happened to be empty, when he stumbles hover a hottoman and falls down on his nose ; I bolts hout, and bolts him hin, by turning the key in the door, and there he is at this werry present blessed moment !”

By the time the waiter concluded this narrative, he was quite in a perspiration of excitement.

“ Has he made any attempts to break open the door ?” said Biron.

“ At first he did, sir ; but arterwards he took to singing comic songs and dancing the hornpipe, or the polka, or something of the kind. It’s a good lock and a strong door, so that I fancy he is all right for to-night, and to-morrow master is going to advertise him.”

“ Waiter !” said a voice, whose tones struck

terror to the heart of that hapless personage, who involuntarily sought refuge behind our hero.

The door opened and a man entered—it was the madman.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LUCID INTERVAL.

WITH the exception of the trifling eccentricities already alluded to by the waiter, there was nothing particularly divergent from the vulgar road, (out of the common way, in the vernacular) in the appearance of Mr. Guy Merlmore, whose identity with his recent companion's brother, Mesmer did not for an instant doubt, firstly because the name of Merlmore was by no means a common one ; secondly,

because there was a still stronger family likeness between them, than even that between *la bellissima* Augusta and Mr. Merlmore, which he had so readily detected; thirdly and lastly because the latter *had* a mad brother, and Mr. Guy Merlmore was certainly not entitled justly to lay claim to a "*mens sana in corpore sano*."

"Waiter!" said the lunatic, "let me have some supper; I am famished with hunger!"

"Yes, sir," said the waiter trembling in every limb, "what would you please to have, sir?"

"Some supper!" thundered the maniac, his eyes beginning to roll wildly in his head to the great horror of the attendant spirit.

"May I have the pleasure of joining you," said Biron politely "I dined with your brother this evening."

"You dined with my brother?" said the

madman, "and pray how is he, and how is his charming daughter, my niece Augusta?"

"Both well," replied Biron.

"Is she not beautiful?" said the madman vehemently.

Without an equal!" replied Biron, and truth gave additional force to his expression.

"Ah!" groaned his companion, "she was to have all—all—every farthing!"

"Indeed?" said Biron in a most sympathising tone, evincing the deep *interest* he felt in all that related to Miss Merlmore and her pecuniary affairs.

"But he is a damned rascal!" exclaimed Guy in a tone of wild ferocity, "I wish I had him by the throat—only for one moment!"

"Had who?" said Biron, not, however, doubting for a moment but that he alluded to his brother.

"Who?" cried the madman, "*who!*—*why*

gave way to a passionate flood of tears—even Mesmer was moved at the sight.

At this crisis the waiter re-entered the room with cautious steps like the assassin in a popular melo-drama, bearing in his hands a dish of rump-steaks with oyster sauce, and other *agremens*, calculated to disturb the process of human digestion, and produce that fantastic visitation usually termed nightmare, the delights whereof none but those who have experienced them can duly appreciate.

But Guy Merlmore, who, like Hamlet, had some method in his madness, seemed at any rate resolved to escape this additional affliction, for fixing his eyes sternly on the dish above described, he pushed it from him with a shuddering expression of disgust, much to the astonishment of his companion.

“Poison ! rank poison !” exclaimed the madman ; and rising from the table, he suddenly, without another word, quitted the room, walked

THE IMPOS

up stairs, and entering locked and bolted himself. Fatigues fell fast asleep within a few minutes, at any rate he remained so for the remainder of the night.

"So, so," quoth Meanwell, "and he having, as I am now aware, an excellent general character, the supper before him.

The last words he uttered as he fell asleep were—

"Thank God, I have finished my work," and the beautiful young man was welcome to the land of rosy sleep, where true happiness abides.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAGER.

"You alluded yesterday evening," said Biron as he sat at breakfast on the following morning with Mr. Merlmore, "to a brother of yours, who went mad, I think you said?"

"I did," said Merlmore.

"His name is—?"

"Guy—Guy Merlmore; he is the younger of the two."

"Exactly—perhaps you are not aware that

THE IN

Mr. Guy Merlmore is a
where I, also, locate at

"Certainly not; I think
I left him, at my place
suppose he has escaped."

"I suppose he has, for
morning that he threw
down stairs, broke open
evening put the roast on
and washed his feet in
mention wearing his w
converting his stockings
other little pieces of his
the *profanum vulgus*."

"Indeed; he must be

"May I venture to
cause of his disease?"

"Certainly; you have
failure of Cashall and Co

"I think I have."

"Well, it appears to
previous to that circum

became a sleeping partner in the concern. On the news of their failure being brought to him, he did not seem much affected, but no sooner were they declared bankrupts, and my brother's name joined in the *fiat*, than he flew into a fit of the most passionate violence, swore that he was no partner ; that Cashall was a diabolical scoundrel ; in a short time he became quite incoherent, and finally went raving mad. Hitherto we have not been able to get any information from poor Guy, as, although he has frequent lucid intervals, the least allusion to Cashall brings on such a paroxysm of fury that we have been compelled altogether to avoid the subject. He is, of course, completely ruined, as all his property goes to the creditors, who will by this means be paid in full, whereas, otherwise there would not have been ten shillings* in the pound for them."

* Which I am told, by those learned in commercial matters, has become a very rare occurrence since the passing of the "swindling-made-easy," acts, relative to insolvent debtors.

"How so?" inquired Merlmore eagerly.

"Excuse me, my dear sir, that must remain a secret for the present, but I am convinced that there has been some dirty dealing in this matter."

"In what way do you mean?"

"With regard to the deed of partnership."

Here Mesmer retailed to Merlmore the assertions of his brother on the previous night.

"But consider," said Merlmore, "the deranged state of his faculties."

"The very reason I am persuaded he speaks the truth."

"Want of true logic again."

"Logic or no logic, I am persuaded that there never was a deed of partnership."

"Prove it."

"I will bet you a hundred pounds that I do so, if you leave the sifting of the affair in my hands."

"Agreed."

"Of course you will render me any assistance or information in your power?"

"I shall be but too happy to be a loser."

"Then I commence my investigation this very day."

"My dear Count, I feel deeply, most deeply indebted to you."

"Not a word, gratitude is unphilosophical; I wish to win my bet; nothing more."

"Ah! true philanthropists always strive to disavow their motives."

Mesmer blushed—from indignation at Merlmore's injustice.

But we cannot afford space to continue this conversation farther; suffice it to say, that before they parted, our ingenious adventurer had persuaded the frank, open-hearted Merlmore that he was one of the most agreeable, amiable, clever, candid, honorable enthusiastic, and last, not least, wealthy young gentleman he had ever encountered. Moreover, Merl-

more had heard and believed all the particulars of the Biron family history, already imparted to Colonel Rossville, thrown out as they were, in hints, anecdotes, and innuendoes, with Mesmer's usual *inadvertence*, and had made up his mind that the lovely Augusta and her thirty thousand pounds could not be better bestowed than upon the most noble Count to whom his soul was as effectually secured as if the blood-signed parchment were positively in possession of that designing grandson of Lucifer—the spiritual merchant of Pandemonium.

of all parties, more especially as the Count had obligingly declared his willingness to take fixtures, carpets, and other trifles adapted to the size and shape of the tenement, at a fair valuation, which of course was a great mutual advantage and convenience.

“Delighted to see you, Count de Biron—are you fond of dancing—introduce you to a partner in a moment—only tell me which is to be the happy fair?” said Colonel Rossmill.

“I am much obliged to you, not just now; I will look about me a little first,” replied Mesmer, whose roving eye glanced like a meteor round the room in search of that lustrous countenance which alone had power to charm his vagrant fancy.

“Ha, ha! not a bad plan, reminds me of a party I was once at in the country—sat next a retired grocer at supper—‘Can I assist you to anything?’ said I, being nearer to the cold chickens than he was. ‘No, thankee,’ said he, ‘I must take a stock first!’”

lation, that a few humdrum prayers mumbled by a man in a surplice, made no *very* material difference in the physical results of a philoprogenitive encounter.

Lights were blazing, dresses rustling, dandies bowing, angels smiling, all was noise and splendour and confusion, as the illustrious hero of these handsomely printed pages made his way across the crowded ball-room to the spot where he had at length descried the lovely object of his search, surrounded by admiring dandies applauding her *bon mots* to the echo, and striving with praiseworthy emulation to outdo one another in the liveliness of their repartees.

But here we must rein in our high spirited Pegasus, whose 'dash along' style has been so severely reprehended by the critic, and give the reader a slight sketch of the fair Augusta Merlmore's personal appearance and character.

This fascinating young lady, then, was about

during her first interview with Mesmer, suffered it to be entirely dormant.

“ Ah! how do you do, Count de Biron?” she exclaimed, as our hero approached her. “ My father has been telling me and uncle so much about you that I quite longed to see you again.”

“ Then your father has made me eternally his debtor,” said Mesmer bowing, with a significant smile.

“ Indeed,” rejoined the young lady, laughing, “ I have heard of many people being in danger of remaining eternally his *creditors*, but your’s is quite a new feature in my experience.”

“ I hope it may not prove a disagreeable one,” replied Biron.

“ Oh! novelty is always charming, you know,” said Miss Merlmore, “ by the bye, how much ~~we~~ are indebted to you for your kind attention to my poor uncle — do you think there is any hope of his recovery.”

to go to a quiet place to diet yourself it is all very well."

"All very well to die at—ha, ha, ha!—really Miss Merlmore, you should have a Boswell always at your elbow to take down your good things."

"I must get some one to take them up for me—and get them published I think, but what could I call the book when it was filled."

"The angel's jest-book, you could not have a better title."

"Well, I must consider the matter—but I perceive that we are destined to waltz."

"May I have the pleasure of being your partner?"

"You may," replied Augusta.

The music commenced—the dancers whirled in rapid circles round the room. Mesmer waltzed badly—no wonder, a couple of private lessons taken in the morning and afternoon

unmarried, portionless daughters, in whose sunshine, like Alexander versus Diogenes *Tub-biensis*, they are apt to stand.

“ Who was that dancing with her ? ”

“ Count de Biron.”

“ Who *was* Count de Biron ? ”

“ Who *was* he ? ”

“ Ah, who ? ”

“ A young man of distinguished talent and family,” replied Mr. Merlmore, to whom this question was propounded by the Dowager Lady Quibbleton.

“ Fortune ? ” persevered the dowager.

“ Very considerable—three thousand a-year, I believe,” replied the gullable papa.

“ Ah, ah ! — a very nice looking person,” — and within five minutes time her ladyship had vacated her *bergere* and was whispering to a young lady *un peu passée* at the other extremity of the room — “ look, my dear, that is Count de Biron — there, that handsome young

to the count, "she is a very disagreeable thin-looking creature; they say her face is like Napoleon's."

"She certainly will make a bony *partie*, when she gets married, if that event should ever come to pass," rejoined Biron.

"I cannot bear any one to fix their eyes upon me for a long time together, it makes me quite nervous, Sampson himself would have been puzzled how to escape from such a Gaza."

"I must confess," said Biron, "that the lady you allude to, and the specimen of antiquity by her side, have honored us with *stares* enough to build a ladder to Mahommed's seventh heaven!"

"Why really, count, you are as inveterate a punster as myself—you can hit hard, I perceive."

"On the contrary, I flatter myself that I *strike light*—when I strike at-all.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRINCE AURELIUS.

THE entrance of his royal highness Prince Aurelius von Rosenberg at this crisis, produced a great sensation, and he was received with still greater *empresment* than our hero by Colonel Rossmill, who although himself descended from a younger branch of one of the most noble English families, and possessor of a considerable estate, like

most Englishmen, entertained nevertheless a somewhat gigantic veneration for rank—In his eye a count was silver—but a prince was virgin gold.

Aurelius von Rosenberg was at that time the idol of fashionable society, about thirty years of age, polished in his manners, without a shadow of affectation, eminently handsome, and gifted with a most commanding intellect, his company was everywhere sought for, and his conquests amongst the fairer sex were so numerous, that had he kept a diary they would have formed by no means the rarest items in its weekly contents.

He was moreover the head of a house whose pedigree was lost in the darkness of the earliest centuries of christianity, and although diplomatic roguery had deprived him of a place amongst the reigning sovereigns of Europe, he still retained estates which produced him an income of some seventy thousand

dollars* per annum; enough, even in this land of 'purse-proud shopkeepers,' to redeem him from the appellation of 'beggarly foreigner,' so often applied by the vulgar to German princes not invested with rent-rolls proportionate to those of our own wealthy aristocracy.

It was whispered -- with what truth we know not--that the option of sharing the most powerful throne in the world had once been pretty loudly hinted to him by the minister, and that his highness had declined the questionable honor, from love of liberty and retirement -- in other words, had refused to sell himself for an empty title, or to wed a woman whose obedience he could not enforce, and whose personal charms he could not admire.

But whatever admiration or still tenderer

* Above 10,000 pounds of our money.

senberg was not to be classed in that obscure category.

Colonel Rossmill had originally become acquainted with him at Dresden, and similarity of pursuits soon ripened their acquaintance into intimacy.

The Prince was a great phrenologist, and a still greater mesmerist. Indeed, his devotion to animal magnetism was so great that he generally had one or more desperate cases upon his hands. Hitherto his philanthropic efforts had been attended with unparalleled—almost miraculous success, and although the incredulous sneeringly remarked that he undertook the cure of none, but young ladies distinguished for their beauty, and more than hinted that the said young ladies were not averse to securing a familiar intercourse with so handsome a prince, the fact was that he really succeeded in many instances, where the most eminent of the faculty had given up all hope of ultimate recovery.

case of phreno-magnetism lately, do you know, at Mrs.—I really forget the name—but it was positively the most diverting thing in the world ; would you believe it, on touching the organs of *wit* and *order* at the same time, the girl started up and declared she would go to the theatre without paying the entrance ; and on touching—exciting I mean—*form* and *destructiveness*, she kicked down two benches that were in the room with the greatest violence and fury !”

“ Jeating aside,” said Biron, who wished to pay his court to the Prince, and perceived that although he affected to smile, he loved not to hear his hobby jested on, “ jeating aside, I am convinced that if any doubt yet be maintained by the enlightened portion of the community as to the truths of phrenology, its union with magnetism would at once set the question at rest.”

“ One would suppose so,” rejoined the Prince “ but such is the aversion of mankind

THE IMP

to the admission of ne
actually known men say
they would not believe.

"Good heavens!" e
men must have been
atheists; for if they
a fact upon the evid
how could they believ
ligion upon the evid
history?"

"How, indeed?" repli
"nevertheless, these pec
christians, I can assure
damned not only every
center, from what th
thodox church with
as you or I might tr
lizard."

"Sublime consistenc
exclaimed Mesmer wit
pity, and disgust, as if

thing about truth, religion or magnetism either one way or the other."

"Nay," continued Aurelius, "they carry their absurd opposition to fact still further, for finding that certain things are effected which it is impossible to altogether deny, they ascribe them to Satanic agency, and account for them by the direct interposition of the devil!"

"How insanely ridiculous!"

"You may well say so."

"But surely this childish doctrine cannot have found many adherents?"

"You are not, then, aware that a *book* has actually been written by a learned and enlightened Clergyman* to disprove these insanities as maintained in the writings of a bigoted divine, who enjoys unfortunately a very extensive popularity."

* The Rev. Mr. Sandby. "Mesmerism and its opponents."

THE IMPOSTOR.

"Is it possible?"

"A well known fact."

"I must confess," said Biron, "knowledge of this interesting-resting science has been chiefly from books, and that, excepting at a theatre, I have never yet had an opportunity of witnessing any decided convulsion, though I have often lost one."

"Then," said Aurelius, "I am at your service, and it will be in my power to gratify you. So if nothing better engages you, I shall expect to see you at noon to-morrow in my library. My house is number 12, Grosvenor Lane."

The Count de Biron expressed his gratitude, and he felt in accepting this invitation. Prince Von Rosenberg was soon introduced into conversation with a grey headed man, and a white headed member of the

the former, a venerable sexagenarian — the latter, a youth who had just turned an ominous corner in the road of life (and military promotion) by attaining his majority.

“ Well,” said Augusta “ what do you think of the Prince ?”

“ He appears to me an amiable, as well as an interesting character.”

“ Do you think he is handsome ?”

“ Very,” replied Biron, whose conviction of his own irresistibility was much too strong to admit of the meanness of detracting from the merits of even a rival’s exterior.

“ He certainly has very fine eyes,” said Augusta.

Mesmer felt somewhat vexed at this remark ; it was going too far ; he was astonished that one upon whom *his* eye rested could think of anybody else’s, but as we have already

dreamed—now do not, my *dear* reader be disappointed ; it was nothing sentimental—she dreamed that she was coming from a ball and that “ the Countess de Biron’s carriage stopped the way !”

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLAIRVOYANT.

On arriving at the house of his royal highness Prince Aurelius Von Rosenberg, in what the fashionable novelists would term the aristocratic regions of Park-lane, our gallant Count was ushered into a library, the magnificence of which at first sight would have dazzled the unaccustomed eye of any one less self-possessed than the adventurous individual of whom this history treats. But Mesmer, as hath been

stated more than once in these eventful pages, was deeply read in the lore of modern novelism.

Pelham, Vivian Grey, and their more humble, or rather more impudent imitation, by Mrs. Gore, Cecil, were books which he had conned to some advantage ; for although the insane affectation of these renowned heroes and their authors may seem impracticable to the minds of the unsophisticated—that is, supposing any such people to exist—many useful hints for the inexperienced in the tortuous maze of society may be gathered from their leaves ; and indeed the lofty principle of making oneself disagreeable to ninety-nine people, for the sake of pleasing the hundredth is still much in vogue with the vulgars, commonly called fashionables, for the terms are in reality nearly synonymous, both signifying common-place, uninteresting, every day people.

Biron therefore was by no means surprised

reclining attitude, or to administer literary morphine to their brains. Instead of the usual inconvenient receptacles for those 'silent friends' too often raised above all human reach except by the cumbrous application of ladders, a circular book-case, with only four rows of shelves, occupied the centre of the room, this ingenious *meuble* was made to turn with great ease upon a pivot in the centre, so that any one, without moving from their seat, might run their eye over above two thousand tomes in a few minutes; this almost entirely obviated all trouble in hunting for stray volumes, so annoying to the student of impatient or sanguine temperament.

Above this circular biblioscope, if we may venture to invent a word for our invention, hung a lamp, with a large shade, so contrived as to throw a light upon the backs of the volumes in the hours of darkness. Sundry easy chairs of strange and varied shape stood round the book-case, amongst which, rocking

chairs of American 'raising' were not forgotten.

The walls were adorned with landscapes of such exquisite coloring and perspective, that, framed as they were, they conveyed the idea of open gothic windows to the beholder, between which, on brackets of carved oak stood marble busts of the illustrious dead, complacently surveying the classic retreat they inhabited.

Upon the various tables were scattered papers and pamphlets in indiscriminate confusion, interspersed with curious instruments, the use whereof it was impossible for the uninitiated to conjecture; snuff-boxes, three cornered notes of amorous contour, daggers, seals, medallions, skulls, casts, portraits in red-morocco cases, locks of hair, and *je ne sais quoi* besides, forming together a most remarkable *olla podrida*, as well worth examination as the curiosities at the British Museum — that mysterious edifice, never by any chance

accessible at the day or hour one takes it into ones head in a fit of antiquarianism to visit it. Not, my dear fellow, that I would have you fancy us one of the book-devouring extractors so facetiously described by Sketch-book Irving. No, no, we love our *otium cum* (at we fancy not altogether *sine*) *dignitate* too well to attempt frequent pilgrimages to the remote regions of Great Russell Street, and after all, if Scriptor will not go to the ideas, ideas must come to Scriptor, and, like Virginius, "we are patient—quite patient!"

On the entrance of our adventurer, a dead silence reigned in the apartment, and the servant who introduced him pointed, without speaking, to an arm chair of inviting aspect, then retreated on tiptoe and closed the door behind him with noiseless dexterity. In two other chairs were seated his friend Merlmore and another gentleman, whom he had never before seen, with sandy hair and a blue satin stock with a very large tie, one corner of

which he was munching with very commendable perseverance.

On the sofa at the end of the room lay a pale, interesting looking girl, and by her side sat the Prince von Rosenberg, his left hand resting upon her head, whilst with the right he occasionally made downward passes over her face and bust. On the entrance of Biron he turned his head for an instant and nodded a welcome, then resumed his former attitude.

There have recently been a great many attempts made to place animal magnetism in a ridiculous light. We say *attempts*—for they were very poor ones, and have mostly served to shew the ignorance and stupidity of the persons satirising; but we are persuaded that any one who has witnessed genuine experiments in this science *must* have been impressed with a certain degree of awe and admiration, however much their success might run counter to his preconceived prejudices.

There was something sublime in the calm,

confident expression of power legible in the features of Aurelius, and the beautiful, death-like tranquillity of the young girl's countenance. The half drawn crimson curtains threw a red, mysterious gloom over the group, and riveted, to their movements, the gaze of the spectators, expressive of the intensest interest.

At length the patient gave a slight, convulsive start, and Aurelius rising, shook hands with his visitors, and informed them that she was asleep.

They approached the sofa. So pale, so marble-like she looked, that it was difficult to refrain from the belief that the form before them was a corpse laid out for burial.

For my part, I cannot imagine how any one who has seen a person mesmerised can even suppose the possibility of the sleep being feigned — at any rate, so skilfully as to deceive men of talent, science, and observation !

“In a few minutes,” said Aurelius, “she will wake—that is, to a second state—Louisa! Louisa!” he repeated, and the girl sat up on the couch, her eyes fixed in a peculiar manner, which, if possible to be imitated, could certainly never be sustained for any length of time in the common waking state.

In a few minutes she arose and walked about the room like a somnambulist, apparently unconscious of the presence of any one, and went through a series of attitudes, alternately, expressive of the most touching sadness, the most enthusiastic devotion, fear, horror, delight—in all, the attitude and expression of her countenance were faultless. The utter absence of all consciousness of being watched gave an artless grace and simplicity, a sublime truthfulness to her actions, which would have made the fortunes of fifty actresses, could they have produced but a humble imitation of their extraordinary facility, and as studies to an artist they would have been invaluable.

“ This,” said Aurelius, “ is her dream — we must let it take its course; it generally lasts for about half an hour, she then becomes *clairvoyant*, and is, I believe, one of the best cases that have ever been known. She formerly suffered from diseases of the most dangerous and complicated kind, and is now almost completely cured.”

“ How long has she been under your care ?” said Mesmer.

“ About three months, she was given up as incurable by Dr. ——— ”

The patient after a time returned to the couch, and again fell into the deep sleep.

In about three minutes the prince roused her a second time, she sat up with closed eyes, and was watched by Mesmer, Merlmore, and Lord Friskerton, under which title, we neglected to state, the gentleman in the blue satin stock had been introduced to our hero, with most careful scrutiny.

Lord Friskerton, by the way, was a very

young man of considerably larger fortune than wit, but vastly good tempered and amiable withal, and gifted with a certain degree of vulgar inquisitiveness, which led him to run after, if not to investigate anything that struck him as being out of the common way, or, as he expressed himself "deucedly odd affairs." For sometime past he had been boring Prince Aurelius to shew him a *clairvoyant*, and Rosenberg had at length consented to gratify his curiosity.

Having taken a sovereign in his hand, the princely mesmeriser now brought it in contact with the patient's arm, which immediately became rigid or cataleptic, and then by touching it with a piece of iron he reduced it to its former condition.

"These experiments with metals," said he "are extremely interesting, but somewhat dangerous, particularly if extended to the whole body, I shall therefore confine myself to this simple illustration."

Aurelius then wrote upon a piece of paper

a few words, and handed it to Biron, who passed it on to Merlmore and Lord Friskerton. They intimated that he was now about to shew some instances of phreno-magnetic developments, which he forthwith did, by pointing with his fingers to the various organs.

The experiment was eminently successful, but as our limits do not permit us to enter into details, we must confine ourselves to the simple statement, that all the corresponding demonstrations were produced by touching the various organs. On exciting *veneration* the girl fell upon her knees and prayed with a fervour that was positively affecting. By transferring his finger to *self-esteem* she was made to rise and draw herself up with a pride and dignity that was equally ludicrous. On touching *attachment* she grasped the hand of Aurelius and poured forth expressions of friendship and regard. *Destructiveness* being excited she tore a pocket-handkerchief to

pieces with every semblance of the most violent rage; and so through all the other faculties.

The prince then begged his visitors to address questions to the somnambulist in any foreign languages they might be master of, assuring them at the same time that she was totally ignorant of every one but her native tongue.

She was accordingly interrogated by Merlmore and Lord Friskerton in Latin, Greek, Italian, and German; and by Mesmer in Spanish and Arabic, of which he had a slight knowledge—with the most astonishing results: the replying to their questions in English without a moment's hesitation or embarrassment.*

* See the supplement to Miss Martineau's "Letters on Mesmerism." "Isis Revelata." Teste's manual," &c., &c., &c.

It may not be superfluous here to observe that this is a most important fact in magnetic science, and one of the strongest arguments against the dull materialism adopted by Dr. E——n and his party. At least, to our mind, nothing can be a stronger proof of the possibility of the soul's existence apart from the body, and, (were any proof thereof necessary,) of the immortality of the soul, than this direct communication of soul with soul. Indeed, we have always seen in the magnetic phenomena, strong evidence of the innate nature of the senses, and of the paramount and absolute ascendancy of spirit over matter.

All the arguments of the aforesaid materialists in their obstinate and unaccountable opposition to the influence of imagination, faith, and will, appear to us trivial and one-sided, and it may be something in favor of our view of the case, that the most eminently successful practical magnetisers coincide with our opinion.

The next wonder of *clair-voyance* displayed by Prince Aurelius's patient, was, if possible, still more extraordinary, for she described to him, at the suggestion of Biron, the room in which Augusta Merlmore was seated, her occupation, and even her attitude—all which were afterwards discovered to have been studiously correct.

The blood boiled in the veins of the fiery Meemer, and his heart throbbed with increased rapidity during this description; but a new turn was given to his thoughts by the experiment which succeeded.

Carefully placing pieces of wool over the eyes of the patient, Aurelius proceeded to bandage the face of the *clair-voyant* in such a manner, that any idea of seeing in the common way was utterly inconceivable. She then read a sentence written on a card in a snuff-box with closed lid, a paragraph from a newspaper, a portion of a letter Lord Friskerton produced from his pocket, and played

a game at *écarté* with Merlmore, which she won—evidently possessing as great a knowledge of her opponent's cards as of her own.*

During this last experiment the eyes of our most noble count were fixed upon the operator with an air of the deepest interest and scrutiny, and a peculiar smile flashed across his features, as if some brilliant thought had suddenly struck upon his fancy.

After trying some other experiments of a similar kind, the *clair-voyante* was thrown into the deep sleep again for a few minutes, then aroused, upon which the prince conducted

*It may be as well to state that all the experiments described in this chapter, and indeed throughout the work, are well authenticated, and probably no novelties to most of our readers; many of whom have doubtless seen Alexis, or other publicly or privately exhibited cases, or read some of the numberless works on the subject.

his visitors into another room, where an excellent luncheon awaited them.

"After this," said Lord Friskerton, helping himself to a glass of Rudesheimer, "I shall cease to suspect those public exhibitions, at which, if common rumour is at all to be relied on, pins stuck in the arms of the poor devils exhibited, are paid for at the rate of one shilling per head."

"More likely per *point*," said Mesmer.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Friskerton, "deucedly good—one shilling per *point*, ha, ha, ha! At any rate there is some point in that joke."

"You will do well, nevertheless," said Aurelius "not to place too implicit credence in these public performances, as there have been many instances of quackery and charlatanism in mesmeric exhibitions as in everything else. Not that by the grossest trickery they can do anything half so wonderful as that which is really effected by the magnetic influence; indeed I am persuaded that the instances of

imposture have been much fewer than is generally imagined."

"What is the reason I wonder," said Merlmore "of the general aversion to animal magnetism?"

"The open, candid manner in which it courts enquiry, and recommends experiment. Had it been treated as a mystery and palmed off upon the public of the present day as in the old time, under the title of magic, divination, oracles, or what not, they would have believed with still greater facility than that of Hook, when on subscribing to the thirty-nine articles he frankly expressed his readiness to attest his belief in a *fortieth* if required. As an illustration of the superiority in interest of conjuring tricks over the real miracles of natural science might be cited the fact that a showman is actually at the present moment exhibiting a *clair-voyante* with considerable success under the title of "the mysterious lady."

"There can be no doubt, I think," said

Mesmer, "that long before my illustrious namesake started his theory, animal magnetism was both consciously and unconsciously very extensively employed, for instance, by the priest of Isis and Osiris *et hoc genus omne*."

"And no doubt," rejoined Aurelius, "many a devout fanatic has exercised a magnetic influence in the cure of diseases under the impression that all was to be attributed to grace from the powers above. I have myself cured cases of rheumatism and palsy by a single application."

"In what way," said Biron, "should you describe the mode of exerting the magnetic power?"

"It is difficult to define the precise sensation," replied the Prince, "I concentrate my whole mind upon the object to be effected, by throwing, as it were, my soul into my eyes or hands, and willing powerfully the effect I wish to produce. Whether there is a magnetic fluid, and how far magnetism is to be compared to elec-

tricity or galvanism is yet matter of doubt and discussion. To me it appears that the greater the faith and the stronger the exertion of volition, the more powerful the effect upon the patient. Physically speaking, I have heard this concentration of one's faculties compared to raising a heavy weight, nor is the simile an unapt one, but there are things which it is more easy to *feel* than to describe."

"Some have greater magnetic power than others, perhaps?"

"Doubtless—it would in a great measure depend upon the strength of their intellects, the development of their organs of firmness and concentrativeness, as also of their imaginative faculties, without which, the requisite degree of faith is scarcely possible."

"There are few things in which I take a deeper interest than in magnetism," said Mesmer, "and what I have seen to-day has increased my passion for the study."

"Any information I can give you," said

Aurelius, “ is heartily at your service ; I trust you will soon find your way here again, or I shall be much disappointed.”

It is scarcely necessary to say that Biron expressed the greatest pleasure at the prospect of availing himself of this flattering invitation.

A profoundly thoughtful expression pervaded our hero's countenance as he took leave of his agreeable and illustrious entertainer, and the Prince's other two guests. He did not, however, forget to send his kind—no—his *kindest* regards to the fair and intelligent Augusta.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE IDEA.

CHANCE had thrown in the way of our adventurous hero an excellent second-hand cab, little the worse for some six months' wear and tear, which, together with a black mare of somewhat showy exterior, he had bought of a gentleman about to leave England for a colonial appointment at a very great bargain, "the whole lot," as the auctioneers would say, including harness and other appurtenances,

being knocked down to him for the sum of one hundred pounds sterling. He also took the vendor's groom into his service, he being a smart fellow, and receiving an excellent character for quickness and honesty from his late master.

As to the latter point Mesmer was naturally very particular in his enquiries, for it is a fact well known, from the arctic to the antarctic zone, that men ever value *that* most *highly* which they themselves are not possessed of.

The "Biron Arms," with which Mesmer furnished the coachmaker, were painted as elaborately as the hurry would admit of upon the pannels. They consisted of a *lyre argent* and other insignia, the mystery whereof their creator alone comprehended.

The motto was from Euripides, and may be thus translated—

"Simple is the language of truth."

"*Simple* enough," thought Biron as he scribbled down this *morceau* of the ancient tragic muse.

With regard to the horse, as may be conjectured, Mesmer was, from his utter ignorance of all matters relating to those useful quadrupeds, quite at the mercy of the man from whom he purchased it, however his lucky stars favoured him in this, as in numerous other instances, and the showy black mare, with her glossy coat and extensive tail, was neither more ancient than stated, vicious of temper, or otherwise defective. She did not *drop her tail*, as hath happened before now to novices in horsemanship, neither did she roar or stumble, or shy, or plunge, or rear, in short, she proved to be a very excellent beast in every respect, and did ample justice to the character given her by her former owner.

Into his well hung cab now Biron sprung, and bade his tiger seat himself within,

and drive him homewards straight without delay.

Not that I would have the reader imagine that Mesmer's inexperience in "coaching" deprived him of the nerve to drive himself. Far from it; he was born a Jehu, with an intuitive talent for driving both horses and men, nor did his newly engaged "slavey" suspect for an instant that his graceful master had never, until the day he bought the cab and mare of his late "governor," in the whole course of his life taken a pair of reins into his kidded hands.

But in fact our excellent hero's mind was too fully occupied with other matters to allow him to direct his absorbed faculties to the guidance of a black mare with a long tail, through the crowded streets of London.

From the scene he had just witnessed, he had caught an idea which, although yet tossing about in his active and designing brains, in a crude and only partially developed state,

threatened ultimately to eclipse in brilliancy of ingenuity and magnitude of results every deep laid scheme which hitherto either his fertile imagination had suggested or his no less remorseless and energetic will had put into execution.

It *can*—it *shall* be done !” thought he aloud, as he sprang from the cabriolet, at the door of his caravanserai, and without replying to, or indeed being conscious of his servant’s query as to whether he should require his further attendance, he darted into the house, rushed up stairs, and shutting himself into his room, turned the key in the door and repeated aloud with the same smile of almost fiendlike glee—

“ It *can*—it *shall* be done !”

He then paced up and down the apartment with feverish excitement, revolving in his mind the desperate and unheard of design he had formed, occasionally clapping his hands and biting his lips, whilst the fixed stare of his

eyes evinced how deeply his thoughts and feelings were engaged.

Gradually, however, he regained his wonted tranquillity, and a settled expression of calm determination upon his countenance alone remained of the storm which had so recently possessed his bosom, excited, in all probability, by the contemplation of some sublime piece of villany.

Reaction is ever the follower of nervous excitement ; thus strange as it appears, Mesmer having thrown himself upon a couch, sank in a few minutes into a refreshing and peaceful slumber.

Who, in the placid beauty of those fair and delicate features, would have recognised the countenance so recently illumined by the fiercest and most malignant passions ? Who would imagine that beneath those long, dark, silken lashes which Queens would have rejoiced to possess, could flash such basiliskine glances as but now were emitted from their

hidden orbs? Who in that smooth, marmoreal brow would suspect the frown of scorn of late displayed? Who dream that those soft lips, so gently parted by the sweet, warm breath, could send forth the blackest and most treacherous lies, the most profound hypocrisy, the wildest blasphemy? Who dream that in those limits, so gracefully relaxed, there lurked a strength even the coarse champion of the ring might envy?

None! Never did the pseudo sacred veil, woven by most cunning priesthood's art, hide so effectually the mystic secrets of their impious jugglery, as did the external form of the self styled Count Mesmer de Biron conceal from the eyes of the world his real nature and disposition.

But, charming reader, let us not—though we must confess that no colouring could render the picture too dark for the truth—let us not altogether disgust you with the character it is our painful duty to commemorate;

bad as he was, Mesmer *had* some redeeming points—at least we *fancy so*—but time must develop them, if they have not hitherto become very conspicuous. And see!—he wakes again—those ominous words—to what can they refer?—

“ It *can*—it *shall* be done !”

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CHAPTER XXIII.

HELL.

MESMER thought it advisable to cultivate the acquaintance of the right honourable Earl of Friskerton with considerable assiduity, and with that amiable young nobleman, besides being much impressed by the distinguished air and style of the graceful count, was, moreover, extremely glad to find in him a constant and agreeable companion, to assist him in passing away the leaden hours, and in getting rid of his

twenty thousand per annum, which he had inherited just in time to prevent him from spending it before he came into its possession under the auspices of sundry obliging and accommodating Hebrews.

Before Biron had known Friskerton a fortnight, they were upon terms of the greatest intimacy, indeed the Count became so indispensable to the Peer, that he actually begged him to make Friskerton-house his own, until the mansion he had purchased of Colonel Rossmill could be arranged for his reception. To this request Mesmer at length, with apparent reluctance, consented, although in reality he was delighted at the offer.

It was not long before he obtained a complete ascendancy over his lordly host, an ascendancy the more perfect, that it was based upon respect and esteem—at least on one side. A strong mind must ever obtain this relation with regard to a weak one; but Mesmer used no finesse or toadying arts to ingratiate him-

self with the young peer. He simply *flattered*—not that he overwhelmed the bear he had undertaken to lead, with the wholesale adulation and fulsome laud so frequently bestowed upon similar animals, and which they will swallow undetected, to an almost incredible extent.—No ; he merely treated his lordship as if he had possessed ten times as much tact, wit, talent, and external advantages, as he really did, yet he never told his lordship that he had either one or the other, but seemed to take the matter for granted—as an acknowledged fact. Then he had a way of suggesting a good thing now and then, and giving Friskerton the credit of it, nay, absolutely making him believe himself the originator, with a thousand other little unstudied flatteries based upon the above-mentioned assumption.

As for Friskerton, he saw in Count de Biron a man of exalted talent and (poor Frisky !) congenial disposition, one, too, nearly

his equal in station and reputed fortune, one therefore who could have no interest in courting his society, but real personal liking. Yes, Biron was his friend, and oh! how infinitely more delightful to confide in such a noble, generous fellow, than in the needy parasites, who even Friskerton could occasionally see through!

The kind-hearted young peer introduced Mesmer to all his acquaintances, and unconsciously imitating, to a certain extent, the tactics of his 'friend,' retailed as facts of established notoriety the stories he had from time to time, after Biron's habitually careless and *inadvertent* manner, received from the lips of that accomplished and veracious personage.

Mesmer soon became one of those "not to know whom argues, &c.;" and such was the admiration and esteem his beauty, grace, and tact, everywhere secured him, that Lord Friskerton began to be regarded merely as

his *pendant*, and 'Biron boots,' and wrappers became facts of universal popularity.

And here, at least, *one* redeeming point in our hero's character deserves to be commemorated; and that is, that although he had it in his power to have run away with at least half-a-dozen heiresses of more than thrice the fortune of Miss Merlmore, his devotion to the divine Augusta remained unaltered, or rather grew every day more intense, indeed, we are firmly persuaded, that had it been made the condition of his seeing her, Mesmer would have daily perpetrated so many downright virtuous actions, as would have served as a set-off against all his other iniquities. No fairy however proposing the condition he considered it totally superfluous to indulge in any such unworldly luxuries.

But we must not generalize too much, because we believe it to be boring; so, as Eugene Sue says at the beginning of all his chapters, 'the following scene took place' some months after the events last narrated in

Lord Friskerton's drawing room a few minutes on the shady side of midnight—which by the way is just this moment by a curious coincidence in the very act of striking. But fear not susceptible reader we are not getting sleepy, nor will our storied page relax one jot in its habitual liveliness, the *early* part of the morning is our brightest epoch, although you might experience some difficulty in 'getting a rise out of us' in the forenoon.

Biron reclined upon a sofa, indulging in a *chibouque* which Friskerton had brought with him from Smyrna or Cairo, we forget which—a glass upon a table by his side filled with a mysterious, colorless fluid, which might have been soda-water, but on near approach smelt most uncommonly like whisky.

Rat tat a tat tat tat !

"There's Frisk come home from the house," muttered Mesmer. A moment afterwards that enlightened senator entered the apartment.—

“ Well Frisk,” said our hero languidly, “ what have you been about ?”

“ Voting about some infernal railway, or some law bill, or something ; I got amazingly sleepy at last, and all I remember is that the duke put somebody down, and Brougham put somebody up, and the government put something off—some explanation about something, I think positively I am quite done up—but this can’t go on much longer, or I shall fall a victim to my patriotism !”

“ But why do you not *spea*k ?—that would make the thing more piquant, seeing yourself in print the next morning.”

“ I have tried---no use---I have not got the pluck, so there’s an end of the matter.”

“ Well, you must adopt the eastern proverb---‘ to speak is silver, but to be silent is gold.’ ”

“ Is it ?---then I ought to have a rather prodigious balance at my banker’s by this time,” said the peer, laughing at what he

thought a somewhat uncommon piece of smartness.

"Ha, ha ! Friak," said Biron, "you should say that in the house some day."

"By the bye, count, did you go to Mrs. Bernard Tullamore's?"

"I did, most noble Friak."

"And pray how was she looking?"

"Beautiful as ever, but sad."

"Sad ! why so ?"

"Nonsense, Friak, I hate affectation."

"What do you mean ?"

"Oh, damn it!--do you pretend to insinuate that you are ignorant of her *penchant* for a certain young peer who would be good-looking if *rouè* were not written on every other feature of his countenance, and who would be a most amiable personage if he were not the most sly and designing humbug breathing !"

To this agreeable *badinage*, Lord Friskerton replied by a self-satisfied grin and an indes-

cribable "no really do you——?"

"Pooh!" said Biron, "you will not extort a compliment, but if you are not blind—which heaven knows you never are, where your own interest is concerned, you must see it—but what are we to do---go to bed like respectable citizens---eh, Frisk?"

"Go to---the devil!"

"With all my heart, if we only knew where he lived."

"Three streets from this there is an excellent hell."

"Bravo! I am just in a gambling humour, but I have only twenty pounds in my purse"

"No matter, you will lose the less—unless you like to make me your banker---but if so, say it before you start, as I make it a rule not to take more than a certain sum with me to these places."

"Upon my soul, Frisk, you grow prudent and economical!"

“A relic from my days of younger brotherhood.”

“What! were you a younger brother?”

“I was, three years ago vegetating upon the munificent allowance of one hundred and fifty pounds a year. I flatter myself that my governor *was* the closest old file* that ever mounted a horse—or, being mounted, e’er got down again!”

“Not so bad as Henry Scales’s, whom we met the other day, he paints those eccentric pictures you know, that are so much admired just now; *his* father, he told me, cut him off altogether, because he could not make up his mind to cut up live bodies and dead, and study midwifery, in short, become a surgeon and apothecary, for the cure of old, and manufacture of new diseases.”

“By the way, Scales dines at the club with

* The slang made use of by Lord Friskerton may appear exaggerated—but it is from life.

us to-morrow, and we are to finish the evening at his chambers—I have never been there before, but I understand he generally collects a few oddities. He spoke of a negro musician and a man born deaf and dumb.”

“He told *me* that some of his prettiest models would be there,” said Biron.

“Indeed?—I suppose not *in statu quo*?”

“Frisk! I must positively cut you, you are getting quite immoral.”

“Bad company, bad company, as Falstaff would say, has corrupted my innocence, Count Bi-ron,” replied the peer with a drawl.

“But I happen to be of English not French family, and my name happens to be *Biron* not *Beeron*,” said Mesmer, laughing.

“Well, Beeron or Biron, it’s a devilish romantic name, and you are a romantic looking fellow enough with those dark curls of yours—though I fancy fair men get on best with the other sex, old boy.—”

“Mrs. Bernard Tullamore, *par exemple*”

said Mesner, in a tone which might be most accurately defined as a cross between a query and a sneer. At this crisis they entered the portals of Pandemonium.

In a short time they were located at the *rouge et noir* table, and having exchanged a few nods with some of their acquaintance who were present, were soon absorbed in the overwhelming interest of the game.

Friskerton, who had some vague idea of the doctrine of chances, began to prick a card with most commendable industry; but his companion with extreme nonchalance threw down a few sovereigns, at random, now upon this color, now upon that, now doubling, now leaving them to accumulate.

Meanwhile Friskerton pricked and pricked, and lost and lost, until he began to back his game by bets to a considerable amount, with equal ill-fortune.

Luck however seemed to smile upon her wayward child in this as in former instances.

Mesmer had thrown down a tenpound note upon the *rouge*—*rouge* was the winner—he pushed the money over to the *noir*—*noir* was triumphant—again his stakes were doubled—again---

“Do not tempt fortune,” said Friskerton, “take them up!”

Again *noir*---six times our adventurer saw his store multiplied--a seventh --- and the relentless *croupier* swept off the golden heap.

“If you had taken my advice---” said Friskerton.

“*N'importe*,” said Mesmer, gaily, “we play for excitement, not for money, I hope.”

The keen eye of a man at the other end of the room rested with a gleam of satisfaction upon the utterer of these words---it was the banker---he did not know Count Mesmer de Biron.

“I have lost two hundred pounds!” said Friskerton as they proceeded homewards.

“And I have won thirty,” said the count.

“The deuce you have, I thought that grand *coup* had cleared you out—why did you not go on?”

“I have no passion for gambling,” said Biron, coolly.

“Nor have I,” said Friskerton, “but then you know there is a sort of *je ne sais quoi* that carries one away—you understand?”

“Indeed I do not, for I never felt it.”

And Mesmer, looking towards the sky, which was just beginning to shew symptoms of sun rise, gave vent to the following brief rhapsody, much to the surprise of his companion.—

“Who comes on purple mists and rosy clouds upheld, clad in a robe of freshening dew and crowned with beaming light?—It is Aurora, goddess of the dawn, her pale bright glances rest reproachfully upon the haggard faces of the two home-reeling youths! As Weimar’s poet sings—

‘The world of *spirits* is not shut—

“ But the gin shops are,” quoth Friskerton, interjectionally.

“ Thy heart is closed, thy senses dead,
Rise student, bathe thy earth born breast
In bright Aurora’s beams of red !” *

“ Why Biron, old fellow, you will be as bad, as your namesake, before you have done with it.”

“ *Nous verrons*,” said the noble rhapsodist as they entered Lord Friskerton’s mansion.

“ And now to bed, to bed, to bed, to bed, to bed !”

“ I wish one was as certain of going to sleep,” muttered Friskerton, pressing his hand to his brow with a lack lustre gaze at a marble bust upon the staircase.

* Faust. We have ventured to throw these lines into English metre, doubtless the original is well known to many of our readers.

HARRY SCALES.

PHRENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS.

Moderate sized head. Comparison and the perceptive faculties predominating in the intellect. Music, Imitation and Ideality rather large. Large Benevolence and love of approbation with only moderate self esteem. Large affections with considerable development of cerebellum.

 HARRY SCALES.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN EVENING WITH AN ARTIST.

AFTER an excellent dinner at one of the Clubs to which Lord Friskerton, and *the* Club to which Biron already belonged, the real and the pretended nobleman accompanied Harry Scales, as had been arranged, to his studio, in order to spend the evening in a manner at once convivial and original.

The artist's abode was in a retired square, once the habitation of the great, the wealthy,

and the fashionable, now chiefly tenanted by lawyers and other professional people, to whom a convenient and central locality was of more importance than the popular prejudices of the *beau monde*.

The houses were mostly of a sombre and melancholy aspect, which was rather heightened than relieved, by the coats of dusky *compo*, which a few here and there had adopted.

The shrubs in the centre had long since broken themselves of the habit of shewing green leaves at the appropriate season, the iron railings by which they were surrounded had grown rusty, and the pump become downright venerable from the lapse of unpainted ages.

Harry Scales stopped at the door of one of the houses, and by the application of a latch key, introduced his distinguished visitors to the interior of the mansion. There utter darkness held its reign, so that not knowing

the *locale*, Lord Friskerton and Mesmer wisely determined to stand still, and watch the course of events.

Meanwhile the artist boldly advanced towards the foot of the staircase, and taking a lucifer from the interior of a flat candlestick which was ingeniously balanced on the extreme point of the balustrade (as being, of all other places, the most fraught with danger to its stability) proceeded to rub it against the wall, with that utter contempt for *paint* peculiar to all members of the human race inhabiting those abodes of savage simplicity and hardy solitude, termed 'chambers,' but which in an artist was hardly to be anticipated.

The attempt was, as usual, unsuccessful, and Scales now proceeded to do what would have been by far the wisest and simplest course in the first instance, viz., to call up the house-keeper.

"Mrs. Snuggins," said he, "bring up a light, these d——d lucifers won't burn!—

They never do when they are wanted—
“It is a great bore,” added he apologetically to his friends, “they have been going to have the gas laid on here, for the last six months, but somehow or other it is never done. Mrs. Snuggins, remind me to-morrow about writing to the gas metre man.”

“Very well, sir,” replied Mrs. Snuggins preceding them upstairs with the candle.

They now found themselves in a large room which, had the house been tenanted by a single family, would have been termed the drawing-room. The paper hangings were of a rich embossed crimson pattern, the furniture of curious and antique workmanship. All the chairs had arms; some were of oak, with high backs; they were ranged round an octagon table artfully inlaid with brass, at one end of the room.

Leaning against the walls on every side were paintings, studies, and half finished pieces, some with their bare canvass backs

turned to the spectator, others upside down, or on their sides in careless confusion. Torsos, too, there were, and casts of heads, and hands, and arms, and legs, with grinning skulls and hideous skeletons. There was a lay figure in one corner dressed in a crimson mantle ; and a looking-glass and an easel and a large square divan, covered with red cloth and surrounded by a screen to prevent the models from catching cold.

There were foils and boxing-gloves in another corner, and ancient helmets and breast-plates, and battle-axes on the wall, with other mystic instruments puzzling to the comprehension of the uninitiated. On either side of the mantelpiece were two magnificent marble vases, and in the centre an enormous stuffed toad, who looked amazingly like the chairman of some society for the propagation of something that is never propagated, or the suppression of something that is never suppressed.

But all this heterogeneous collection of ob-

jects was left in comparative darkness by the two wax candles upon the table, placed in the sockets of a candelabrum, at an angle of forty-five degrees, with supreme indifference to the polish of the said table, and the interest of the fire insurance company, the light of which was insufficient to penetrate the remote corners of the spacious apartment. And on the table also stood a steaming urn of fragrant mocha and the best cigars that were to be procured, in odd looking cases like unto boots ; and claret bottles and meerschaums for those who preferred them.

“ Be seated, my Lord,” said their host, “ take that chair, Count de Biron, and try this coffee, it is *a la Francaise*.”

“ These are good cigars,” said Mesmer.

“ I am glad you like them, they were sent me, by a brother of mine, in the navy, who smuggled them with his own hands.”

“ I never smoked a better,” said Friskerton,

"and the certainty of their being smuggled adds a zest to their flavour."

"For my part, I prefer a pipe," said the artist, as he filled a meerschaum.

A knock and a ring were heard at the street door.

"Two of my prettiest models," said Scales, "I am painting a madonna from one of them, and a despairing sea-nymph from the other ; I know the knock."

Scales was right in his conjecture, the door opened and two beautiful girls entered the room, the one a magnificent brunette, the other a little fairy with chesnut curls, and laughing, light blue eyes. They seemed quite at home in the artist's studio, and the brunette (who by the way was the despairing sea nymph) kissed the painter in a vastly affectionate manner.

The blue eyed Madonna on the other hand wished him a very ceremonious good evening, and so the artist kissed her instead.

“Miss Julia Jackson, Miss Emily Stackray, Lord Friskerton, Count de Biron,” said Harry Scales; “and now, Julia pour out the coffee that’s a good sea nymph!”

Having taken off their shawls and bonnets the girls seated themselves at the table, and a very lively discussion on the present state of art took place, in which the model young ladies displayed considerable practical knowledge.

“I cannot help thinking,” said Mesmer, “that the artists of the present day exhibit a most woeful deficiency in imagination, and choose very uninteresting subjects, and to that rather than to deficiency in the execution I ascribe the existence of so few great artistic geniuses.”

“I am quite of your opinion,” said Miss Julia, “and it was just what I was saying to Scaly the other day. ‘My dear Mr. Scales’ said I, ‘why don’t you paint me riding to heaven on a rainbow?’”

“Ah! why not?” said Biron, “there is

something sublime, something elevating in a subject like *that*?"

"Yes, but," said Lord Friskerton, "how the deuce could you keep your seat on such a slippery thing as a rainbow?"

"Oh!" said the Madonna, "of course Miss Jackson would ride gentleman's fashion."

"For shame, Emily, you should not say such things."

"Well," said Scales, "I do not think my despairing sea-nymph such a bad idea."

"Can we look at it yet?" enquired Mesmer.

"By all means; there it is upon the easel yonder, it is turned round to evade the dust--- Julia, just hold the light a moment---well, what do you think of it?"

"It is beautiful!" said Biron "the harmony of color is perfect, and I can conceive nothing more graceful than the attitude or more touching than the expression."

"Ah!" said Julia, "I always enter into the spirit of a subject, don't I Scaly?"

"I am indeed immensely indebted to you" replied the artist.

"Do you think it like me?" inquired the pretty model naïvely.

"The face is a perfect portrait of course," replied Mesmer.

"Idealized a little perhaps."

"Features like yours require no idealizing --as for the rest, unless I saw you in the costume."

"Out of all costume you mean, unless a robe of sea water goes for anything."

"I must say," said Lord Friskerton "I do envy you Scales most devilishly!"

"Now let us look at the Madonna."

At this crisis there was another knock at the door, and a young man of about seventeen made his appearance. He was of middling stature, and naturally good-looking, but had a wild, dissipated air. His dress was almost too rich to be tasteful, his stock and waistcoat especially, being of the most resplendent descrip-

tion, he wore a gold watch guard, and a diamond ring, and had an off hand manner which, though not of a vulgar character, conveyed an almost painful idea of recklessness to his associates."

"Mr. Theodore Ramsay," said Scales, and then proceeded to introduce him to the company already assembled.

That well-stocked personage threw himself into a chair, stretched out his patent leather terminations with an air of extreme nonchalance, and shaking back his light hair from his face, began to puff away at a cigar with industrious impetuosity.

The party was soon increased by the arrival of Mr. Desmond, an author of great wit and talents, and a sculptor of some eminence who had a genius for acting, and was great in comic songs and imitations of popular members of parliament and comedians.

The stream of conversation now flowed rapidly, some anchovy sandwiches and excellent punch

made their appearance. Art, science, politics, metaphysics, love, pleasure, beauty, were by turns discussed. Desmond had travelled much, and made the personal acquaintance of many foreign celebrities, he knew also most of the great literary lions of his own country, and was full of entertaining anecdotes. Lord Friskerton made up in spirits what he wanted in wit. Scales himself was a quiet humorist, and though not a man of words, an excellent listener. The girls threw in their nonsense by way of leaven. The sculptor imitated Peel, and Sibthorp, and Benjamin D'Israeli,* to the life, and Ramsay gave way to a wild merriment which seemed rather the result of a despairing mind, than of exuberant animal spirits. It was remarkable

*The situation of jester to the House of Commons seems now to lie pretty equally on the shoulders of these two last mentioned worthies. Sidonia's buffonery is however decidedly the more *piquant* of the two.

that he shrunk from all allusions to the future, he seemed to talk on life as if the next morning were to be his last, and absolutely turned pale with dismay on the sculptor's throwing out a hint as to the lateness of the hour, and the propriety of separating for the night.

The bold paradoxes and startling cynicisms of Mesmer especially delighted him, and he was eager in noting down an extempore song which our hero composed at the request of Miss Julia Jackson, who had heard from Scales that he possessed that talent.

The artist, who had merely made the assertion in jest, was not a little surprised when, after a couple of minutes' reflection, Mesmer quietly begged the fair sea-nymph to give him a subject.

"Oh! something about an artist or a painting."

"Shall it be humorous or serious," inquired the improvisator.

“ Serious—horrible, if you like — I do so love horrible stories !”

“ Very well then, we will call it ‘ The Painter’s bargain.’ ”

And Biron sang to a wild Schubertain melody, accompanying himself with a few chords on a guitar, (on which instrument Scales was a proficient) the following stanzas.—

The painter stood in his darkened room,
Completing a work of horror and gloom,
On a stone he had torn from a ravishing tomb.
—The monarch fiend of hell !

Again he stood in a chamber bright
And finished a work of glory and light ;
Oh ! few could bear that beauty’s sight
—The virgin queen of love !

Ha !—hark ! a voice from that phantom fell
“ What shall I give thee painter, tell,
To make thee for ever the slave of hell,
All things are in my power ?”

Then the painter turned to the shape divine,
" Friend," he exclaimed, " I'm for ever thine,
Let the virgin queen of love be mine
But for a single hour !"

" Bravo !—excellent !—ha, ha, ha !"

" I don't know," said Friskerton, " it makes me feel quite uncomfortable, there is something utterly diabolical about you this evening Biron."

" Oh, it was glorious !" said Ramsay, " I wish the devil would make me such an offer — I would be so reasonable !"

" Beware he does not take you at your word," said Mesmer, quietly.

" You are not one of his agents, I hope?" said Scales, laughing.

" Do you know anything of this young Ramsay," said Biron to Desmond, as they left the house in conjunction with Lord Friskerton.

" All I know of him," replied the author, " is that he has been unfortunate enough to

lose both his parents, has no property whatever, though his family is very good, I understand. He had a government clerkship, which he gave up without consulting any of his friends, and has since taken to painting landscapes, in which I believe he has not been very successful. His recklessness and extravagance have caused his relations altogether to renounce him. He is clever, but so insanely self-willed, so perfectly the slave of passion and impulse, that any attempt to give him a profession or fixed position must eventually fail. Not that I ought to censure him, for I have been almost as bad myself, though the blind goddess has given me some portion of literary success and earthly possessions."

"But there is a sort of desperation about this boy, which makes me fear he will even commit some serious crime, should opportunity offer or necessity compel."

"My impression," replied Desmond, "is that he will either commit suicide or turn actor before very long, but I do not think he will come out as a bandit or a horse-stealer."

"I should like to assist him," said Biron, "it is a pity that such talents, as I believe him to possess, should be checked in their healthy development."

"Well," said Desmond, "I shall be most happy if you can render him any real assistance. I myself offered, some time since, to take him as my private secretary, which would at least have kept him out of harm's way, secured him a certain income and a comfortable home, but he declined it after a few days consideration. The fact was, a play of his was performed at some minor theatre, and he, therefore, happened to have a little *ready money* at the time. By the way you remark how well he dresses ?"

"Say rather how expensively ?"

“ True, it would be more correct ; I introduced him to my tailor, and he has run up a bill of fifty pounds within seven months. Not being of age, a fact I unfortunately forgot to communicate to the man of coats, the latter has no legal remedy, and I feel uncomfortable, being, as it were, *particeps criminis*.”

“ Good God !” exclaimed Mesmer, “ the idea of feeling compunction for a tailor’s sufferings !—can you give me poor Ramsay’s address ?”

“ I will send it you to-morrow ; but, my dear Count, I sadly fear that your kind liberality will be sown upon very barren soil.”

“ So do I,” said Friskerton, “ I think it is great humbug.”

“ Well, good night,” said Desmond, “ I shall take a cab ; you know I live on the other side of the park.”

“ Good night !”

“ Nice fellow, is Desmond,” said Friskerton,

"I always liked him—there is no affectation about him, and he does not kow-tow to every Lord he falls in with."

"No *savoir vivre*," said Mesmer, who was jealous of anybody but himself obtaining ascendancy over the young peer, and moreover rather disliked Desmond, not personally, but because he was a man of keen judgment and discrimination, and a little too fond of exercising them upon individual character.

"A fine girl that despairing sea-nymph!" suggested Mesmer by way of a safety valve.

"Very," replied Friskerton, and till they reached his door he talked of nothing else but artists, models in general, and Miss Julia Jackson, and Emily Stackeraay in particular.

"I wish I knew where Julia lived," said Lord Friskerton.

"Scales can tell you, I dare say."

“ More likely warn me off like a d——d game-keeper,” said his Lordship.

“ He certainly has the game in his own hands,” replied our hero.

“ Again good night.”

CHAPTER XXV.

AT THE OPERA.

“AND so you think Fornasari wants grace?” said Mesmer, as he stood beside Miss Merlmore, in Colonel Rossmill’s box at the opera.

“I do;” replied Augusta, “what do you think of the new *singer*?”

“The new singer—I did not observe one—what is her name?”

“What! have you not heard of the celebrated Chicorini?”

“No, I never look at the playbills, and rarely at the stage.”

“Then why do you come to the opera.”

“To enjoy the strange dreams and reveries which the sound of the music excites in my imagination, and to see—Miss Augusta Merlmore.”

The last words were uttered in an almost inaudible voice, nevertheless Augusta heard them, and stooped to pick up a flower she had dropped — was it to hide a blush?”

“I wish the opera house were burned down!” said Mesmer.

“Burned down! what a dreadful wish—but why?”

“We should have something new in its place.”

“But what could we have more delightful?”

“A thousand things, if people would only exercise their invention; imagine Lumley

seated amid the ruins of the opera house like Marius at Carthage?"

"Ha—ha—ha! laughed Lord Friskerton, "I have been hunting for you everywhere, my dear Count, and should never have found you had I not chanced to meet the Prince von Rosenberg, who told me at once where you were."

"I wish Friskerton you would go to the — I mean if you are going to Mrs. Bernard Tullamore's box, I wish you would remind her of her promise to send me those verses of Miss Darcy's on 'Impossibility.'"

"The young peer took the hint without suspecting for an instant the object that suggested it and departed to execute his friend's commission, and flirt with Mrs. Tullamore."

"An excellent person is Friskerton," said Biron, "but at times a terrible bore!"

"So I should imagine; he once gave me an account of catching a salmon in the Liffey that lasted full two hours!"

“ He could not have baited his hooks well.

“ He might have abated them altogether very well indeed.”

“ But his being a bore is not to be wondered at.”

“ Why not ?”

“ I understand his father was a terrible old screw.”

“ A *plane* reason for his aptness to *nail* listeners.”

“ He should have gone to the bar and become a judge.”

“ Do you think him calculated for such an office ?”

“ At any rate he is full of old *saws* and modern instances.”

“ I think we have exhausted the carpenter’s box of similies.”

“ I believe there is the *chisel* yet left, but we will leave that to the fashionable novelists for the noses of their heroines.”

“Has Prince Aurelius shown you any wonders of *clair voyance*?”

“He has, great wonders!”

“And are you converted?”

“I am convinced.”

“You should get a case, and experimentalize for yourself.”

“No, I for one am content with the evidence of my senses.”

“Do you not think that magnetism may be applied to the most dangerous ends?”

“Doubtless it may, and has been before now; the prince tells me that he has frequently mesmerised people without their being aware of it, thrown them into a trance, and made them do the most extraordinary things.”

“Good heavens! I hope you are not magnetising me at this moment!” exclaimed Augusta raising her eyes timidly to those of the Count.

But the calm expression of those soft, dark orbs reassured her, and Mesmer said in a tone of gentle sadness.

"The power may be also unconsciously exercised, are you sure you are not magnetising me?"

"*We progress.*" muttered Biron as he turned away after handing Augusta into her carriage.

"Do not forget that you are to dine with me to-morrow," said Colonel Rossmill.

CHAPTER XXVI.**FURNISHING.**

COLONEL ROSSMILL had given up possession of his house to the Count, the money had been paid, the deeds signed, sealed, and delivered, and Mesmer, thanks to the information so surreptitiously obtained from Messrs. Monville and Cashall, had cheated the worthy Colonel out of some thousand pounds, without that gallant officer, in the most remote

degree, suspecting the fact, which it was equally the interest of Monville as of our hero to keep secret.

But even had the lawyer, which was highly improbable—even had he revealed the true facts of the case to the Colonel, Mesmer was perfectly prepared to deny the allegation, and indeed it must be remembered that Colonel Rossmill had himself proposed the sum to be given for the house, and that had Biron not accidentally become aware of Monville's rascality, and thus become accessory thereto, he *might* by possibility have been a purchaser of the house upon the same terms, without any detriment to his character as a "most honorable man."

However, the house was now his, and an excellent house it was ; he had taken the carpets and curtains, slabs, looking-glasses, &c., at a valuation, so that the work of furnishing was an easy one, and was effected in a somewhat showy, yet withal tasteful manner, by

the contracting upholsterer, for the sum of five hundred guineas.

And lest, firstly, the exalted imagination of the reader should murmur at these occasional allusions to arithmetic ; secondly, judging from his own experience, should assert the impossibility of furnishing a house for so trifling a sum as that we have mentioned ; we reply, firstly, that considering the very small patrimony of our adventurer, it is absolutely necessary for us to keep some account of his expenditure ; secondly, that the people who sell furniture are, on the average, the most dangerous of all tradesmen, as far as the question of " honesty being the best policy," is a matter of any importance.

To exemplify this fact, if that it requires any exemplification, we can assure the reader that we have not unfrequently been asked twice, or even thrice the sum, for a piece of furniture, at one shop, identically similar to

that we could have bought it for the same price at another's ; and a lady of our acquaintance gave us a notable instance of their roguery a few days since.

It seemed that in a quiet, morning costume she entered one of these repositories of chairs and tables, and enquired the price of a small ottoman of novel shape.

“ Five guineas ma'am,” said the shopkeeper, who concluded, by her being on foot, and without a page behind her, that she must be a nobody.

As she was leaving the shop, the carriage of the rich and fashionable Lady D—— drove up to the door.

“ Our friend lingered a moment at the door, and heard her ladyship enquire the price of the very same ottoman.

“ *Ten* guineas your ladyship,” said the man of rosewood and mahogany.

“ But I do not like this blue damask ;

what will be the expense of having it green ?”

“ *Eleven* guineas,” quoth the man.

“ Very well,” said Lady D—— ; let me have it as soon as possible.”

A week or two afterwards our friend saw a green damask ottoman in the drawing-room of her ladyship, with whom she was acquainted ; it was not the same she had seen, but one of very inferior make and appearance. Of course she enlightened her friend as to the *mechaneceté* of which she had been a victim.

So much for Upholsterers ! and here let me observe, that our object, in writing books is, to give information, and that no information is unimportant which conduces to increase our knowledge of the world. It may, it is true, be a matter of little consequence—a trifle—whether we are taken in or not occasionally by a tradesman or two, but the whole system is false and detrimental—

ex uno disce omnes — life is made up of trifles.

Mesmer de Biron's house was furnished, as far as the mere necessities were concerned ; a housekeeper and other servants were engaged, and the Count began to think of the decorative department.

Accordingly, he drove down to the shop of a noted dealer in casts, and was soon supplied with a Venus de Medicis, an Eve at the fountain, an Ariadne, and sundry busts and vases of antique shape, with befitting pedestals, all which tended to give his *salon* an elegant and tasteful aspect, to which two or three voluptuous paintings, and copies of the old masters by young but clever artists, not a little conduced.

“Faith,” said the courageous adventurer as he threw himself into a *bergère* in his new drawing-room, “it is a fine thing to be a respectable householder—now if there were a general election to-morrow, I should have a

vote to dispose of, or rather *four* votes, for I might sell one to each of the candidates and never take the trouble to vote after all !”

With which characteristic observation of our hero we will conclude this unimportant chapter of our history.

CHAPTER XXVII

AUGUSTA.

MR. MERLMORE had taken a furnished house for his wife and family, who had arrived from Cheltenham, his 'last known place of abode,' as the writs have it, and Augusta left her uncle Colonel Rossmill's, to go and live with her parents.

They gave a dinner party. Lord Friskerton and Mesmer and Harry Scales were there, together with Mrs. Bernard Tullamore and Cecilia Darcy, the young poetess. Our hero sat next to Augusta, and opposite to Mrs. Bernard Tullamore, by whose side was the

devoted Friskerton. The artist and the “azure hose,”* found themselves in delightful propinquity, and as for the rest of the guests, they were, as Eōthen would say, so “utterly respectable” (chiefly inhabitants of squares and crescents) that they defy even the magic of description like ours, to do anything towards making them interesting.

One of these anthropophagi nevertheless deserves mention, as having furnished the “virgin and scales”—to talk astronomically—in plain English, Harry Scales and Cecilia Darcy with subject matter for a little quizzing, to which they were severally addicted. He was a man of doubtful age, with a triangular-shaped countenance, bounded on the north by a forest—a *black* forest of remarkably obstinate hair with a considerable tendency to curl three ways at once. On the east and west, by pine-

* A novel of transatlantic celebrity, and although replete with absurdity, is well worth perusing.

like plantations of a similar character, and on the south, by a white neck-cloth of *papier maché*, or something so very smooth, and stiff, and shiny, that we may be excused for mistaking it for that fashionable substance.

Towards the centre of this animated *Delta* rose a round, rugged hill, which, as Pinnock's human Geography teaches us, was called bottle-nose, and beneath it yawned a tremendous cavity, which rather resembled an earthquake than a volcano in its operations; though the vast quantity of words he managed to pour forth between his mouthfuls somewhat reminded one of the latter phenomenon and suggested the notion that the *champignons* going down and the sentences coming up, must occasionally meet with terrible collisions in the passage of his throat.

"Who is that monster opposite looking at the album?" said Harry Scales, in a low voice, to Cecilia.

"My maternal uncle," replied the young lady quietly.

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed the horrified artist, “ I beg your pardon, I had not the slightest idea.”

“ Nonsense !” said the young lady, “ you are quite right ; he is a monster.”

“ And is he really ?”

“ My uncle?—not that I am aware of—who is he, Augusta ?”

“ Dector Core, the homœopathist,” replied Miss Merlmore to her friend.

“ With a non homœopathic appetite,” murmured Biron, “ I met him at the ——s the other evening, and incredible as it may appear, saw him devour seven slices of sponge cake one after another !”

“ What an ogre !”

“ Quite a natural phenomenon, I assure you, or I should not have alluded to such a subject ; but when I heard again and again repeated his ‘ I’ll trouble you for this and that,’ and saw ‘ this and that’ disappear with more than magical rapidity, I felt, I can assure you,

a serious apprehension that the next time he opened his enormous mouth, he would swallow me, boots and all at a mouthful."

"But look at the non homœopathic what an inimitable grimace !"

"Hush, the ogre is looking this way," said Augusta.

"Dinner is on the table."

The above conversation, of course, took place in the drawing room, although we believe we have already described the position of Mr. Merlmore's guests at table.

Now, this was very bad behaviour on the part of the young people, and the gods of propriety, whoever they may be, looked down from their peculiar corner of Olympus, and vowed retribution for their violated laws.

The last whisper of our hero was overheard by the doctor with the triangular countenance. The mighty Cox felt desperately annoyed, he vowed most dire revenge, and soon hit upon a scheme to appease the injured manes of his dignity.

It required but little penetration to detect the position in which Mesmer stood with reference to Augusta Merlmore, and upon that rock the Doctor founded his battery. First, he asked Augusta to take wine with him,* then attacked Mesmer with a similar invitation, then he appealed to the young lady as to her opinion regarding the last new opera (which by the way he had never seen, as like Moore's dreaming peer "he loathed sweet music with all his soul") whereupon he insisted upon knowing the lover's opinion upon the same interesting subject. In fine he with the most persevering ingenuity succeeded in preventing them from enjoying a moment's converse to themselves.

At first Biron simply regarded him as a bore, and by answering his questions with repulsive terseness, endeavoured to check the unceasing flow of his oratory; but when, after dinner, the triangular faced homoeopathist

* A troublesome and antediluvian custom, now happily exploded amongst the more civilized classes of mankind.

persisted in planting himself by the side of the radiant Augusta in the drawing-room, and striving to absorb her attention, his indignation was vehemently roused, and he felt how infinitely agreeable it would be to assassinate Dr. Cox on his way homewards with a bowie knife, *a l'Americaine* and hang his carcase by the coat collar from the spikes of an area in Piccadilly. This, however, was an after consideration, at present he was compelled to devise some more quiet mode of getting rid of the bore.

“None but the brave—and so on!” thought Biron, as he walked up to his future father-in-law, who was standing at the other end of the room.

“I understand,” said Mesmer, that Colonel Rossmill sent you a cast of the head of Bobtail, the man who recently knocked his Grandmother’s brains out, and starved his wife and children to death in a hay-loft—I should like to see it, if it would not be troubling you too much. Dr. Cox too there is most eager to inspect it.”

“ By all means then,” said Merlmore, “ come and see it at once.”

Biron crossed the room to the homœopathist, and told him that Mr. Merlmore had something he particularly wished to shew him.”

They, accordingly, all three proceeded to another room where the cast was lying on a table. In a few minutes Merlmore and the Doctor were involved in a hot discussion as to the natural benevolence of the unhappy criminal ; pending which ‘ lecture upon heads,’ our hero slipped away, and returning to the drawing-room, prepared to decide without delay the momentous question upon which the happiness or misery of one of the purest and most beautiful creatures that ever breathed the air of life depended.

The weather was sultry, and Augusta had just stationed herself at a window to inhale the cool breeze of night, whilst the *eblouissante* Mrs. Bernard Tullamore turned over a heap of Italian songs upon the piano-forte, with the assistance of the assiduous Lord Friskerton ;

and Cecilia Darcy, and Harry Scales ratiocinated together in an opposite corner of the room. What the other respectable people were doing we really do not remember, but have a shrewd suspicion that the female portion were engaged in 'praising absent friends,' with their importantly unimportant hostess.

Mrs. Merlmore, by the way, *née* Rossmill, was some years older than her husband, and if, for once in a way, common fame was right, her handsome husband was by no means a model of fidelity; she was, however, fat and shortsighted, perhaps too a sharer of her spouse's necessarian doctrines. She might have been pretty in bygone days, but as she took no trouble to 'make up,' did not, at the time we treat of, present any extreme traces of fascination to the eyes of the carnal minded. She was serious, some said stupid, and it was certainly not from her maternal parent that the fair Augusta inherited her constitutional vivacity.

A peculiar presentiment caused the heart of Miss Merlmore to throb with increased rapidity, and her soft, dark, liquid orbs to seek the apex of her little satin slippared foot, as Mesmer took his seat beside her and spoke—of the heat of the room, and the ears of her silken-coated Blenheim.

Yet even in these, apparently, unimportant commonplaces Augusta could not but feel the thrilling influence of that divine ether, which the refined and pure minded Shelley, not inaptly deemed the vital spirit of the universe, that wondrous power of which so much has been written, said and sung, pondered and dreamed—the inexhaustible freshness of the theme yet unabated, of which the fantastic Heine with such truly poetical feelings tells us in the words of the ghostly minstrel arising at midnight from his grave and addressing his spectral comrades—but we *must* give the passage complete:—

“Twas night—the student left his room,
To wander in darkness and midnight gloom,

And as he passed by the church yard wall,
He gazed on the tombstones, white and tall.
The moon shines pale on the minstrel's grave,
And the cypress trees in darkness wave,
And a whisper is heard—"I come—I come!"
And a shadow dim, stands o'er the tomb;
It is the minstrel's well-known face,
On a tombstone high, he takes his place,
And strikes his lyre, the wild blasts groan,
And he sings with hollow spectral tone."

"Ha! know ye still the ancient song
For which our hearts have burnt so long,
Ye strings so old and tough?

*The angels call it a heavenly spell,
The demons say 'tis a torture of hell,
But mortals term it—love!"*

Even in our careless translation we flatter ourselves that the racy originality, and wild grandeur, of these lines is not totally lost. We have long meditated giving a selection of Heine's poems in an English form to the public, but the times and the people are so de-

cidedly anti-poetical that we fear we must content ourselves with a volume for private distribution, as the fear of a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*, being taken out against them might deter possible readers from daring to become purchasers.

To return to the fair Augusta.

Soon with calm but impassioned gaze, the bright eyes of the enraptured impostor were fixed upon her beautiful features, an unwonted glow illuminated his usually pale countenance, low musical soul—penetrating accents fell with a magic power upon her ear. Stronger than ever became her conviction that to wed one so superior to the weaknesses and vanities of her race, as Count Mesmer de Biron, one who had for her sake scorned the richest and the loftiest matches, one who united the most brilliant intellect to unequalled personal appearance; the profoundest learning to the noblest birth, and most extensive fortune, was indeed the

highest happiness that could fall to the lot of woman.

“How oppressive is the heat of this room!” said Mesmer.

“It is indeed,” said Augusta.

“And how delightfully refreshing the air from the open window.”

“Delightful.”

“It is thus with the soul shut up within itself in fevered loneliness thirsting for the balmy breath of sympathy, a vent for the over-charged sensation, an expansion for the feelings—where is the soul to find relief?”

“Continue your simile,” said Augusta, with cast down eyes and quickened pulsation.

“Briefly, then to conclude my allegory, the casement is love—and love is happiness—the only happiness to the wise—you approach the window, and the joyous zephyr rushes to meet you, Augusta! it is for you to complete the mythus?”

Perhaps this sounds pedantic, far-fetched, to the critical reader, but Biron's mind was of no common cast, and then the tone, the looks on such occasions outweigh whole lexicons of words !

Before they parted that evening, Mesmer de Biron had proposed, and been accepted by Augusta Merlmore.

What painter, as the latter, retiring to her bedroom for the night, threw herself upon her knees by her bedside, and poured forth thanks to heaven for her new found bliss, could have refrained from assimilating that graceful form—that countenance radiant with the enthusiasm of love, beside which the long dark ringlets so gently undulated, along the white pure neck and virgin breast, throbbing to the first pure transports of budding passion, with the houris of Moslem writ, or the classic nymphs of mythologic story !

And *he*, he too who stands alone with the night, like a dark statue, in the balcony of his

ill-gained home, *his* features too might claim comparison with seraphs, yet methinks by some their *expression* might be more readily likened to the fierce triumph of a fallen archangel!

CECILIA.

PHRENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS.

A tolerable intellectual lobe. Sense of humour, Imitation, Number and ideality large, the sentiments fully developed. Love of approbation large. Affections large.



CHAPTER XXVIII

CONFIDENCES

THE next day Cecilia Darcy called upon Miss Merlmore. They were old and intimate friends, had been born in the same County, and known one another from childhood.

"I have come," said Miss Darcy, "to entrust to you a secret."

"And I have a confidant," said Augusta.

"I think I can guess



CHAPTER XXVIII**CONFIDENCES**

THE next day Cecilia Darcy called upon Miss Merlmore. They were old and intimate friends, had been born in the same County, and known one another from childhood.

“ I have come,” said Miss Darcy, “ to entrust to you a secret.”

“ And I have a confidence to make to you,” said Augusta.

“ I think I can guess its substance.”

“ I am sure I already know your secret.”

“ Count de Biron proposed to you yesterday evening ?”

“ Mr. Harry Scales made you an offer ?
Am I correct in my supposition ?”

“ You are. Am I in mine ?”

“ Perfectly ; and you accepted him ?”

“ I did—and you ?”

“ Did likewise—I wonder whether we shall be happy !”

“ As happy as it is possible to be, in this world of cares and sorrows !”

“ What do you think of the Count ?”

“ He appears to be amiable, accomplished, frank, handsome—in short, everything you could desire. ”

“ He is indeed, Cecilia, and what is still better, he is one of the most kind-hearted and benevolent beings in existence ; do you know he rarely passes a day without going to see my poor, mad uncle, and they tell me that he

always seems better after his visits. To every one else, even to my father, poor Guy is violent and repulsive."

"How dreadful!—it is, indeed, kind of the Count."

"Yes, and he says that perhaps he may be enabled to effect, by degrees, my uncle's recovery, and even hints at regaining his property; it is surprising the trouble and anxiety he entails upon himself; I more than suspect, too, that he has gone to the expense of consulting some of the most eminent lawyers on the subject."

"What noble disinterestedness!—by the way he has bought two of Harry's pictures, and brought Prince Aurelius to his studio the other morning, to see the new painting he had just commenced, which Rosenberg immediately offered to take when completed."

"Mr. Scales is certainly rising most rapidly into notice; he will soon be one of the most noted artists of the day."

“ I am so glad you think so ; you should see his last design from “ The revolt of Islam,” it is magnificent ; but perhaps I am not an unprejudiced judge. You know, my dear Augusta, that I have no fortune, and that Harry has nothing but his profession, or, doubtless, we should have been united long ago. Ours is a courtship of nearly three years’ standing.”

“ And *ours*,” said Augusta laughingly, “ of little more than three months *going on* ; indeed, I have felt some scruples as to whether the Count has not been too precipitate.”

“ My dear friend,” said Cecilia, “ if love does not exist after half a dozen meetings, I do not believe that it ever will at all.”

“ I must candidly confess,” rejoined Augusta, “ that the very first time I beheld my Biron, I felt a sort of electro sympathetic thrill which I never remember feeling before in my life.”

“And I with equal candour acknowledge that the first time I met Harry Scales, I thought him the most agreeable and fascinating person I ever encountered.”

“You must not write any more odes to the Prince de Rosenberg,” said Augusta slyly.

“I never did,” replied Cecilia blushing, “but in his character of a magnetiser—the proud, cold-hearted creature.”

“Nevertheless, he is very handsome,” said Augusta pensively, “and there is something mystic, *a je ne sais quoi* about him which makes one feel—”

“That it would not be impossible, but very unwise to fall in love with him.”

“Exactly, and it would be happy for more than one person we know had they borne this in mind.”

“But do you not think it possible that he may form an alliance with some one in his own rank of life?”

“ No ; I have heard him declare hundreds and hundreds of times that he would marry a peasant girl, if he could find in her all the qualities which he deems indispensable in a wife—and these are simply comprised in the word—*perfection*.”

“ He is a strange creature, and seems to act from wondrous and lofty principles.”

“ Perhaps so ; yet, I am inclined to think that liberty is his greatest deity, and to have his own way in everything, his grandest principle.”

“ One thing I like about him, he never gives advice.”

“ And, if his own words are to be believed, never takes it.”

“ Perhaps after all he is only a sublime Egotist.”

“ Yet he does much good.”

“ But with what motives ?”

“ Fie, Cecilia ! do not be uncharitable, or I shall think—”

What Miss Merlmore would have thought must remain a mystery to succeeding generations, for at this crisis we were disturbed by a morning visiter, and on the honor of a novelist, when we resumed the pen, our former train of reminiscences was utterly and irretrievably broken."

CHAPTER XXIX

WARNING.

MYSTERIOUS paragraphs in the Post and Herald announced to match-making maternity that a certain noble count and his presumed three thousand a-year had vanished from the matrimonial market. More than one fair bosom heaved with painful emotion at the intelligence, for Mesmer had been liberal in his attentions, and many a visionary countess had been created by his roving glances.

“Is it true?” said Lady Quibbleton to Prince Aurelius, whom she encountered at one of the Marchioness of Saltamont’s *soirées*, to which she had contrived, God knows how, to obtain an invitation. “Is it true that your young friend the Count de Biron is about to marry Miss Merlmore and her ninety thousand pounds?”

(N. B. Multiplication by three, is a sort of brevet rank usually assigned to the fortunes of young ladies—bear this in mind ye ardent speculators of the drawing-room and boudoir !)

“I am not aware that he is about to espouse either,” replied the prince, with an almost imperceptible tinge of annoyance in his tone.

“Dear me, why there is a paragraph in the——”

“I never read the newspapers.”

“Do you dance the cellarius?”

“Dance the *cancan*! quoth Aurelius with

a smile, as he escaped from the charms of her ladyship's conversation.

There was one thing he could not stand—old women. Much as he railed against marriage it was chiefly in the society of the young and fair that he delighted. Even that of men had few attractions for him. He liked to gaze on beauty, and he liked the deference of his girlish friends. They listened to his words as to those of an ancient oracle, they revered him as a God, by whom the rhymes of more than one Pythoness were inspired.

With the male sex, on the other hand, he felt bored and embarrassed. Either they were pedants, men who had drank deep of the learning of the schools, with little independent exercise of thought, or they were practical, common-place souls to whom the poetical was unrevealed, and their inferiority in intellect to himself was so palpable, as to annihilate all possibility of sympathy. Half of them would prose and wonder over questions he

had long since decided, few in all probability destined to reach, as a conclusion, the point from which he commenced his enquiries. More than all he abominated the society of young men fresh from college. The notions, (if any) contracted at a university are so confined, so ludicrously one-sided. Nothing excited more horrible ideas in the mind of Prince Aurelius, than the expression Oxford-man, Cambridge-man, or, in his own land, student of Bonn, Heidelberg, or Berlin. What Wellington-boots are to the feet, universities are to the mind, he would say.

“But,” said Colonel Rossmill, himself an Oxonian, as they one day argued this oft contested point, “what would you substitute in their place?”

“A course of private study.”

“But what test would you have for men about to enter the church or any other profession in which a degree is now thought requisite?”

“I would have no church and no degrees, and for professions an examination as at present, though certainly conducted in a very different manner and on very different subjects.”

“But do you not think that the association of young men of similar age and pursuits is beneficial.”

“Decidedly not.”

“But it excites emulation.”

“Which of all things I would avoid; men should aspire to the excellent not to excel.”

“Yet I fancy there must be an age in which the effervescence of youth must bubble and evaporate, surely this is better at a college than in the world.”

“Oh!” rejoined the prince, “I have nothing to oppose to a seminary for the acquiring of the noble arts of hunting, tandem driving, and boat racing.”

And so, for the time, the matter dropt.

“I cannot understand this about Biron,” thought Aurelius, “I am surprised that he did not allude to it yesterday, and he is

generally so frank—certainly Augusta is very beautiful—I might have made her Princess de Rosenberg—but now it is too late—too late! is it possible that I—I, the cold unimpassioned student — Bah! away with such folly!”

And Aurelius fell into a reverie.

“Good evening, your highness,” said a voice.

He turned round, it was Biron.

“Good evening,” said Aurelius, “I congratulate you on your prospective felicity.”

“Thank you, my dear prince,” replied Mesmer, who was by this time on the most intimate terms with the prince. “I have resolved to *do the deed!*”

“Think, reflect a moment before, like Curtius, you plunge into the gulf of matrimony—remember there is no return.”

“I have both thought and reflected.”

“And you are determined to sacrifice your freedom.”

“ Can you blame me, when my chains are mingled gold and roses ?”

“ You will repent it—I never yet knew a man who married and did not repent it.”

“ I never repent. And where could I find a more beautiful goddess to devote myself to than Augusta Merlmore.”

“ A few years and the beauty you admire is faded.”

“ In a few years you and I shall sleep with our fathers.”

“ Time is but relative, but in how very short a period compared to the total duration of man's existence does beauty lose its bloom.”

“ Then you presume that I cannot be happy when my wife ceases to be pretty---Hem!---ten years of happiness --- for you will allow the probability of Augusta even *improving* up to her eight-and-twentieth year — ten years is worth an experiment.”

“ I have awakened from such delusions.”

"Then take my advice and go to sleep again as fast as you can. Nothing makes people more miserable in this world than over wisdom."

"Our great object should be truth."

"Which we never arrive at."

"No, but we labour towards that end."

"And each step we advance in our labours, disrobes life of some delightful though deceptive charm. Better a happy fool than melancholly sage!"

"*Cha cum a sonjont.*" *

"And now for the cellarius."

* This phrase was originally French, but, with many others, has been translated by the devil, (the printer's) into an unknown tongue of his own invention, which it would puzzle the ghost of Irving himself to decypher.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VESTIGES OF CREATION. — A SCIENTIFIC
INTERLUDE.

“ HANE you read this new book, Prince ?” said Lady Saltamount, to Aurelius.

“ There are so many new books.”

“ I mean ‘ The Vestiges of Creation,’ replied the Marchioness, motioning to him to seat himself beside her on an ottoman, with which wish, as she was still young, and had fine eyes, he instantly complied.

“ I have—the mysterious author honored me with a presentation copy,” replied the Prince.”

“ And what is your opinion of its general principles ?”

“ First give me your word that you are not the writer.”

“ I write a scientific work !”

“ You are accused of a romance.”

“ Unjustly, I assure you ; but even if it were true, this book is—”

“ A romance of science—works of fiction affect to describe what *probably* would happen under certain circumstances, ‘ The Vestiges of Creation’ do no more.”

“ I certainly must confess,” said Lady Saltamont, “ that the perusal of its pages did not add even *one conviction* to my mind. It appeared to me that much the author says *might* have been ; but there is scarcely a fact one could point to and say, this is satisfactorily proved, this *must* have been, this *was* as he has stated.”

“and yet,” said Aurelius, “notwithstanding the incorrectness or distortion of facts, the strained analogical reasonings, and the apparent ignorance of the writer as to what has been already written, with a similar view by the older materialists and the German Geologists, so little known in this country, yet (excuse my patriotic arrogance) so far beyond your countrymen, if not in practical details, at least in grandeur and completeness of their general theories ;* notwithstanding all this, the author of ‘The Vestiges,’ as a collator and arranger (though decidedly without any pretensions to original genius) deserves the highest credit for his research and laborious ingenuity.

* In a lecture we had an opportunity of hearing more than three years ago, at the assembly rooms at Bonn, Professor Noeggorath condensed, into a discourse of scarcely two hours’ duration, a history of the earth’s geological formation little diverse from that maintained in ‘The Vestiges.’ For further remarks on this subject, see appen lix.

His style, too, is agreeable and plausible, and his book may pave the way to other and more successful attempts to unravel the mystery of existence. Towards this end, however, *he has done nothing*. His 'original globule,' and his parturient 'fire-mist' are at best but retrospective conjectures, and even could they be proved to be facts, would in no wise lessen the difficulty of accounting for the phenomena of the universe. The fire-mist and the globule, containing in themselves the elements and principles of all future things, are obviously quite as wonderful, as nature in its present and more advanced condition, and the question, whence, and how did *they* come into existence, change or modification ? or being in existence, *uni ergo* remains still to be solved."

"Which," said Lady Saltamount, "we will not now attempt. I am infinitely obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in criticising for me."

“For heaven’s sake ! do not take my careless observations for an attempt at serious criticism !” exclaimed the startled prince, who abhorred flippancy in scientific matters. “You might as well take my young friend De Biron’s poem for a serious abridgment of the treatise.”

“What ! has the Count written a poem ?”

“Yes, it is too bad, a burlesque upon the Vestiges—he burlesques everything.”

“Oh, how delightfully funny ! I must get him to let me see it—here he comes.”

“I thought he had sent you a copy already,” murmured Aurelius, “or I should have held my tongue. I hope you will discountenance such profanation.”

“Depend upon it, I will read him a most severe lecture on the levity of his muse’s behaviour,” said the marchioness. “Ah ! Count, the Prince has been telling me of your poetical perpetration ; I am dying to read it ; I hope you have a copy of it with you.”

“ I am afraid *I have*—the printer’s proof in my pocket.”

“ You are going to publish it, then ?”

“ Mercy, my lady ! suspect me not of the vulgarism of popular authorship ! No, I am merely having *a thousand* copies printed for private circulation.”

“ Well, you must promise me the first copy.”

“ Your ladyship may command the *second*, but the *first* is already dedicated to her at whose instigation I took up the goose-quill.”

“ I understand—the happy object of your choice—the second be it then, and now let me entreat you, as a special favour, to read it to us aloud.”

“ Yes, pray do favour us.”

“ We shall be eternally grateful.”

“ Do not disappoint us.”

Numberless similar entreaties soon resounded on all sides, in vain Mesmer affected

reluctance, pleaded hoarseness, imperfection, and a dozen other excuses, usual on such occasions ; his objections were, one by one, overruled by his fair petitioners, (for be it observed that on such occasions masculine bipeds usually stand aloof, or continue talking with real or assumed indifference) and the Count drawing from his pocket a sheet of printed paper, commenced reading, in a solemn tone, with a grave and sedate expression of countenance, that contrasted strangely with the convulsions of laughter of his listeners—

THE VESTIGES OF CREATION.

BOOKMAKER LOQUITUR.

When first of all, I took in hand
The business of creation,
The world was all a *fiery mist*
To outward observation,
All smoke and blaze, confusion dire,
Before the tempests scudding,

With here and there a *nucleus*,
Like plums in a plum pudding.

II.

Now how or whence this fiery mist,
And plums had a *beginning*,
I don't know, therefore cannot tell,
Enough, they took to *spinning*,
The fire-mist took to *gravitate*,
And thus conduced to twist 'em,
Thence every nucleus became
A splendid *astral system*.

III.

For moving round, their rapid whirl
Produced a ring external,
Which cracked to bits—of future *suns*
Each part became the kernel,
Suns majored *planets*—they of *moons*
Were captains by like fracture,
And *Saturn's ring* may still be seen,
To prove the manufacture.

IV.

The earth now like a fire balloon,
Or Bengal light went flying,

Fizzing and whizzing round the sun,
At perspiration trying,
In course of time, of course it grew,
Much cooler, also smaller,
Though Jove and Herschel older are,
And fatter, also taller.

V.

The earth now having ceased to boil,
Like pea-soup in a kettle,
The lighter portions upwards flew,
The heavier did settle,
(True, *Ovid* tried—some years ago,
A scheme like this to fudge off,
But men of stars and stones and bones,
Your classics don't think much of.)

VI.

Now water came—by accident,
Or gaseous condensation,
Oceans there were, rocks, islands, mounts,
Took up their situation,
Then rain formed lakes, streams, polypi
Sea-weed appeared, and shell-fish ;—

But stay, and I will tell you *why*,
The world's so cursed selfish.

VII.

The earth when crusted and condensed,
In gravity specific,
Comes nearest tin, that metal hence
Of ills is so prolific ;
And hence for *tin* your worldlings risk
The loss of youth and heaven,
Knowing their chances of success
Are nearly five to seven.*

VIII.

Now nature tried her practised hand,
At trees and living creatures,
Improving each succeeding beast,
In form as well as features,

* The specific gravity of tin is, 7,66, that of the earth, 5,299

Mollusca, saurians, reptiles then ;
Though some cannot determine,
Which first their tails began to wag,
The fishes or the vermin.

IX.

Birds spread their wings, and mammals soon,
Four legged, shew their faces,
One dines upon his fellow-brute,
Another calmly grazes,
And last, as often fair caprice
Makes gentlemen of flunkies,
Apes, one fine morning drop their tails,
And men grow out of monkeys.

X.

And lest this change should puzzling seem,
Know that such generation,
If not in fact quite proved as yet,
Is so in speculation.
And here I'll give at least one hint,
I really did not cabbage,
Relating to a fine machine,
Found out by Mr. Babbage.

XI.

Which for some thousand turns goes right,
And then it seems goes wrong,
Thus ages long baboons may howl,
Their heir then sing a song,
(Many at this idea so bright
Have stared and vainly wondered,
Twice two, they say, is all the same.
As twice ten or ten hundred.

XII.

His meaning, I must say, becomes
More dark the more I scan it,
As also what he meaneth by
Bouleversement of a planet,
Which taketh place with Uranus,
Whose moons perverse, to fool us,
Turn in the teeth of nature's laws.
—Exception proof of rule is.)

XIII.

A pretty mess all things were in,
When in a state of chaos,

I came, I saw, I conquered all,
Like Cæsar, Julius Caius,
And yet I'm happy to propose,
To weigh men's souls like guineas,
For brains *are* souls, and by the scales
Distinguish wise from ninnies.

XIV.

To measure thoughts by pints and yards,
And faculties by acres,
Found a galvanic shop and sell,
To would be bards and lakers,
A cask of genius ready made,
To spendthrifts potted caution,
And men whose cowardly legs *will* run,
Of valor any portion.

XV.

Of my ideas I frankly own,
That I a deuced lot owe,
Especially that *monkey tale*,
Was cribbed from Lord Monboddo,
My name a mystery must be,
I really can't tell *you* it,

What's in a name ? yet in this verse
'Tis writ—if men but knew it.

XVI.

FIN.

Friends ponder well these *facts* obscure,
Done into verse with wisdom,
By one who 's seen a thing or two,
And what is more, has quizzed 'em !

We will not stop to describe the “bravos !” the praises, the compliments, the entreaties for copies, by which our hero's lecture was followed. It added one more melancholy example in support of man's tendency to sneer at, rather than admire the union of science with imagination, and we have chiefly introduced the above verses from a consciousness of having, at the commencement of our history, dashed somewhat boldly *in medias res*. We

must confess that we admire the old plan of telling—

“ What went before, by way of episode,”

and flatter ourselves that with the aid of the above poem, Rollin's ancient history, Gibbon's Rome, Hallam's Middle Ages, Roch's revolutions, and our novels, the reader may put himself in possession of the history of things in general, with considerable facility.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EXPLANATIONS.

“ Sixty thousand pounds in the funds ?” said Mr. Merlmore.

“ Precisely, in the three per cents ; you see my position in a pecuniary point of view is soon explained.”

“ You have no landed property then ?”

Within half an hour after his interview with Mr. Merlmore, Mesmer de Biron drew the last fifty pounds that remained of his money from his banker's.

END OF VOL. I.

T.C. NEWBY, Printer, 72, Mortimer Street Cavendish Square.

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THE IMPOSTOR ;

OR,

BORN WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANTI-CONINGSBY."

PHRENOLOGICALLY ILLUSTRATED

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL II.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQ.

1845.

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THE IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER I.

MEDITATION.

IN his elegantly furnished drawing-room, surrounded by works of art and odoriferous flowers, sat the graceful and ambitious impostor whose memoirs we are endeavouring so imperfectly to sketch for the instruction of the human race and the warning of the simple and inexperienced.

A book was in his hand—"The Life of Mahommed, the Prophet-Founder of the creed of Islam"—but his eyes wandered from the storied page, and his thoughts were at that moment rather occupied with the difficulties of the present than the facts of by-gone ages.

"Honesty is the best policy!" Never was a truer or a wiser axiom propagated; for setting aside those uncomfortable sensations, usually termed twinges of conscience, from which Mesmer de Biron was utterly emancipated, and the tortures of constant apprehension and dread of discovery which are, in ordinary cases, inevitable; it is sufficiently plain that, in a shrewd, suspicious, calculating, wide-awake world like that we live in, to be a successful rogue requires no ordinary exertion of address and talent; indeed we are disposed to believe that to be a great rascal, for instance a Julius Cæsar, a Mahommed, a Napoleon, a Cartouche, or last not least, a Count Mesmer de Biron,

it is necessary to be a great hero, and more than that a great and original genius.

But a great conqueror, or even a great pick-pocket may meet with an occasional reverse of fortune, an obstinate fortress or a lost battle, an active policeman, or *gen d'darme*, or a month at the treadmill ; and yet be destined to a fresh career of triumphs ; but the social impostor, on whose preservation of character, respectability, and outward appearance every thing depends, cannot afford to take a single false step ; for him there is no retrograding ; a single trick laid bare to public ken, and like a bridge without a keystone, or a train of logical induction upon false premises, the whole edifice, so artfully raised and supported, crumbles to the ground and the abomination of desolation instantly usurps its place.

Mesmer was well aware of this, at the same time he believed that he had founded his structure upon such sure and safely contrived foundation, and inch by inch upraised it with

such consummate art, and surpassing ingenuity, that like the pyramids of Ghiseh, it would stand the test of time, and that nothing short of an earthquake or some gigantic convulsion of nature could tear open its dark and secret recesses.

Exegi monumentum *cere* perennius
Regalique situ pyramidum altius.

I've raised a monument than brass much stronger,
Bigger than that at Charing Cross, and longer !

He would Horacise with a mixture of pride and facetiousness, as he reviewed the brief, dazzling course by which he had risen from the grade of an obscure and indigent shop-boy, to be "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," the envy of youthful aristocrats and the admiration of the beauties of the occident.

"And have I not a right to this position?" he would exclaim, internally, "I, the son of the greatest poet, perhaps the greatest man that England ever produced! Is not my blood of noblest Norman race, why shou'd I deem

myself in any way inferior to the mushroom lords I meet with? Who were the great grand-fathers of half of these proud nobles? The student of heraldry and genealogy laughs their would-be ancestral pride to scorn. And how did they obtain their boasted peerages? by deeds of courage, virtue, or patriotism,—or boroughmongering, fawning, threatening, and betraying the rights and interests of the people? Which is the more honourable title, that which is procured or bought by such base, truckling, tradesmanlike means, or that which is boldly arrogated and established, with daring ingenuity and craft, by the sole power of one calm, energetic mind?

Of all consolations, self delusion is at once the most agreeable and the most potent; those manners which, in our hero, were at first mere clever acting, those trains of reasoning which were originally but a sarcastic mockery of argument, became by degrees firmly implanted in his nature; and it is scarcely an exaggeration to

say that, at times, he actually believed himself legally to hold the rank he assumed, and looked upon the story he had invented as an absolute and incontrovertible statement of actual facts.

He, even, in a fit of desperately audacious enthusiasm wrote a letter to the Russian minister in London informing him that his patent of nobility had been, unfortunately, thrown overboard, with other papers, in a storm, during his father's return voyage from Italy, and requested to know how he could obtain an acknowledgment of his title from the Court at St. Petersburg. The minister kindly wrote to one of his friends high in power at the Russian court, and received for answer that an immense number of records and important registers had been burnt about the period at which the Count de Biron's grand-father was supposed to have received his title ; that it was therefore quite impossible to prove the fact after the lapse of nearly a century, but that the Emperor was quite willing to acknowledge the rights

of his friend, providing he (the minister at London) were satisfied of their validity. The Russian minister having taken a great liking to Biron, partly on account of his acquaintance with Russian literature and history, after seeing a few papers and letters of very musty aspect, which Mesmer shewed him, expressed his perfect conviction of their genuine character and accordingly our hero received a formal acknowledgment of his rank from Russia, upon which, as may be imagined, he set no trifling value.

Nevertheless Mesmer's position was becoming exceedingly critical, he had spent all his money and had allowed his passion for Augusta Merlmore so far to overcome his reason that he had determined to sacrifice the chance of bettering his fortunes by a wealthy match, and had even as we have seen consented to the settling of her fortune upon herself. This, however, he could not very well avoid without confes-

sing that his boasted wealth was infinitely less abundant than he had so plentifully hinted, and the world so greedily credited and even exaggerated.

Merlmore might, and probably would require some more substantial proof of his possession of so large a sum of funded property as sixty thousand pounds, and even could that difficulty be got over, the interest of Augusta's fortune was manifestly insufficient to maintain them in the rank and station in society he had assumed. His only available resource was the house he had so recently purchased, but although that might no doubt have been easily mortgaged for much more than he had given for it; the money thus obtained would at the most, even supposing that he ran in debt to the utmost of his power, have enabled him to carry on the war for a few years only when a grand crash would be inevitable; and should nothing turn up to his advantage in the

interim, what was to save him from poverty, insignificance, if not utter ruin, and the discovery of his dearest secrets?

As long as he remained unmarried, none had a right to ask or demand his confidence; to pry into his doings, or question him as to his intentions. "A moment let me pause before I assume the chains which must and will obstruct my energies, and fetter my designs" thought our adventurer, as he leant back in his comfortable *bergere*, and fixed his eyes upon the minute portion of the empyrean visible through the higher panes of the window above the summits of the opposite houses.

A scheme—a brilliant scheme had for some-time past irradiated the mind of the Count, and since the acknowledgment of his title by the Czar of all the Russias, we may call him so with less scruple—but this scheme required time for its execution, time and trouble; in the mean time the marriage must be delayed, and the impatient lover muttered dark and fearful

curse as the necessity of procrastinating the anticipated happiness forced itself upon his conviction.

“I wish that dolt Friskerton would make his appearance !” muttered Biron, “ I hate being kept waiting, and I dare say this dinner at Richmond will be a very slow affair indeed ; if it were not for the sake of meeting this young Duke of Gamblesbury I don’t think I should go at all !”

CHAPTER II.

IN THE KITCHEN.

THE door opened, and a footman in a splendid livery appeared upon the threshold of the apartment.

“ There is a young woman, sir, below, wishes to see you !” said the servant.

“ A young woman ?”

“ Yes, she says it is very perticlar, and won’t take no denial anyhow, sir.”

“ The devil she will not !” said Biron, turn-

ing pale as a gloomy presentiment of impending evil came over his mind. "What is her name?"

"She won't give no name sir."

"Perhaps she has mistaken the house."

"No sir, she asks for Count de Biron, and says she must see you on affairs of the most witallest himportance."

"Shew her up then," said Biron resolutely.

"Yes sir," said the footman winking his eye as he descended the stairs for his own especial and confidential satisfaction.

"You are to walk hup, mum," said that worthy to the mysterious visiter carelessly preceding her on the stairs.

Biron had recovered his composure; his features were, if anything, calmer and paler than usual; he begged the young woman to be seated, with a tone of easy politeness; and then followed the footman to the door as if he had forgotten something. The attitude of that worthy, as his master unexpectedly opened

the portal, was remarkably suspicious and suggestive of the notion that he had just applied or been about to apply his ear to the key-hole at any rate he looked red and confused.

"James," said Mesmer quietly! "if Lord Friskerton or anybody else calls, show them into the library, and — you need not stay there — you understand."

"Vell," muttered the footman, as he descended the stairs, I must say master is a keen one, I don't like his way of looking at one so cool and devilish-like, it makes one shiver. I'll tell you what Sago" said he, as he entered the kitchen, to that eminent amongst tigers and valets, "that's an amazing pretty girl I have just shown up, and if I'm not vastly mistaken she's a victim of misplaced affection."

"Lauk!" exclaimed the housemaid, "do you think master capable of such willany, he looks so gentle and always speaks so kindly to everyone."

“That’s hall wot the French call turnyer,” said James, hall my hi, and no mistake!”

“An optical delusion utterly devoid of all erroneous ingredient,” quoth Sago, who was a man of education above his rank in life, and who delighted in a pomposity of diction, peculiar to himself. “I flatter myself I understand the governor’s idiosyncrasy.”

“His *what* ;” said the cook in amazement.

“His nature or character,” explained the tiger.

“I conceive that I comprehend it more perfectly than most people, than the generality of the human race I mean ; and a mature consideration of circumstances which I have encountered in the course of our brief mutual experience, has led me to the conviction that what in figurative language or metaphorical illustration is commonly termed the *heart* of the aforesaid governor has acquired the adamantine durability of an anciently constructed brick-bat.”

“Good gracious !” cried the housemaid “in spite of all your long sentences I’ll never

CHAPTER III.

THE VISITER.

“MAY I inquire?” said Mesmer, with studied politeness, and in tones of more than ordinary suavity, “to what I am indebted for the pleasure of this visit?”

The fair stranger, whose features showed traces of grief and prolonged suffering, did not appear to be above twenty years of age, she fixed her large, blue eyes upon those of Biron, for an instant with an expression of the bitter-

est anguish, and burying her face in her handkerchief burst into a passionate flood of tears.

"My dear Madam, calm this agitation, I implore you, and explain with all convenient speed your motives in calling upon me, as I expect a friend almost directly, and am about to leave town with him."

"Ask your own conscience ! Alfred !" Sobbed the stranger.

"I should think you were better able to enlighten me" said Mesmer with a sarcastic curl of the lip.

"I am not to be deceived. I know you—it is useless to keep up the farce of denying your own identity ; when some months ago we met in the streets, half delirious as I was with pain and want, I was for a moment deluded by your specious manner, but it needed little reflection to convince me of the falsehood of your assertions."

"But what is it you desire, my good woman, you really try my patience sadly with your

tirades which are of course too absurd to be worth denying, pray come to the point?"

"I desire wherewith to maintain my child—your child—and myself;" replied the poor girl, with a look of doubt and bewilderment, as if her convictions were, in some measure, shaken by the consummate coolness and effrontery of our hero.

"Indeed?" said Biron, "have you perhaps any other trifling request to make whilst you are about it?"

"Alfred!" exclaimed the unfortunate girl, after a moment of hesitation, suddenly throwing herself upon her knees before her seducer; "once, dearest Alfred! is there no part, no remnant, no minutest vestige of the affection you once professed for me surviving in your heart; can you look without remorse or pity on the wreck you have made; does no feeling of compunction awake in your mind at the sight of one who, for you, lost honour, family, and name; who at your desire sacri-

ficed every hope of future happiness. I do not ask to share your rank, your wealth, your splendor — I am content to serve you in the humblest capacity, so that at times you speak a word of kindness or smile as in the days that are past — but even if all love and kindness for the mother is banished, or their place supplied by hatred and loathing, let me plead for the innocent fruit of our criminal embraces, of the indulgence in delights still sweet to remembrance, for which one at least, of us, has been so bitterly punished; let me entreat you to cherish, to watch over, and educate our child; let him not grow up in ignorance, and poverty, and vice! Surely, Alfred, there are duties which a father is, equally with a mother, bound to perform towards his offspring, whether or not the marriage formula, you were wont to condemn and ridicule, and which in an evil hour you taught me to despise, has preceded its nativity !”

The excitement of the speaker had brought

a bright glow to her pallid cheeks; her eyes beamed with the lustre of former days, she looked more beautiful in her mournful eloquence than when first her young and innocent heart throbbed to the seductive persuasion of the serpent destroyer of her peace; and it seemed that even *he* felt the irresistible charm; for scarcely had she finished speaking when she found herself clasped in the arms of her cruel and faithless lover, and a kiss of affection imprinted on her lips.

“ Dear, dear Clara,” exclaimed he in tremulous tones, “ forgive my neglect, my insane vanity and pride, which prompted me to wish that, on resuming our dormant ancestral name and title, none should recognize in the proud and courted Mesmer Count de Biron, the obscure and lowly Alfred Milford. Yet much as I have wronged you I vow to heaven that I acted as I have done only to prove the truth and disinterestedness of your love. Nobly have you stood the trial, henceforward your happi-

ness shall be my care, and our boy shall receive every advantage that money, care, education, and the fond affection of a father can afford. But remember! let the past be past, a careless word to another may cause me the most painful annoyance, and insure your own destruction. Forget that Alfred Milford ever existed.—I have almost forgotten it myself.”

“My dearest Alfred.”

“Henceforward call me Mesmer: even in private it is not expedient to allude to that which must be buried in eternal oblivion.”

“Then Mesmer—how strange it sounds—what an extraordinary name!”

“It was hereditary in my mother’s family,” said Biron.

“Dearest Mesmer then, I must get accustomed to the word, you may rely upon my secrecy, and discretion, as on my love.”

“Kiss me, Clara, and whatever circumstances may have compelled me to do, doubt not my real, unchangeable devotion. I am obliged

to leave town this afternoon, but to-night I will be with you, and to-morrow you shall be established in suitable apartments where it is to be hoped you will soon learn to forget the privations and sufferings you have endured."

"Dear Alfred—Mesmer I mean—fare you well for the present!"

"*A revoir* dearest — confound the thing!" muttered Biron, "there is Friskerton, I do believe they will meet in the passage, and I shall be bored with his stupid quizzing just when I am least in the humor for it. However I think I have acted for the best in getting the girl into my power again—there is no knowing what she might do —besides she really is devilish pretty, and until I am married—humph! great convenience—and then my son—by Jove! I am a venerable looking specimen of paternity—I will try a new experiment of education on him; he shall turn out a prodigy both moral and physical—Emil, Telemachus, Cyrus, and Co. shall yield to him the palm!

I will buy him an estate, invent him a pedigree and make a *de facto* gentleman of him—for he himself shall never know the truth.—Ah Friskerton old boy! how are you, I suppose we start at once, wait for me, I shall not be five minutes getting ready, it is a splendid day for the Star and Garter."

CHAPTER IV.

DISINTERESTED FRIENDSHIP.

“You look moody, Biron,” said Lord Friskerton, as soon as they were seated in the carriage, “what is the matter?”

“Nothing” replied Mesmer as people generally do to similar accusations.

“Perhaps that pretty blue-eyed girl I met in the hall has something to do with the matter, she looked as if she had been crying, I am afraid you are becoming a very dissipated person?”

hearing the name, except in connexion with his friend Mr. Thomas Styles; who is he?"

"A poor devil of a baronet, whose father lost his estate by a law suit, and who lives by writing review articles, and translating and speculating in pictures. He is rather a clever sort of man. The Duke is trying to get him something, but being in the opposition side of the house, has not been successful as yet. I think I shall try and do something for him myself."

"Why, what interest do you take in him?"

"I dislike to see any member of the aristocracy reduced to want or discomfort."

"Well, order-philanthropy, extended down to baronetage, is something new to me, but how do you know that Sir John Nokes suffers either discomfort or want?"

"He is married, titled and fortuneless."

"An evil conjunction in good truth, suppose now I were suddenly reduced to penury,

what would you say, Friakerton, if I proposed to you to give me ten thousand pounds, which after all to *you* would be no very prodigious sacrifice?"

"I should say, by all means, my dear fellow, and thank you for your confidence in my friendship!" replied the generous young peer.

"Well I believe you are in the right, and I respect your noble sentiments," rejoined Mesmer.

"Nonsense, Biron, I am sure you would do the same for me."

"Well to be candid, I think I would, but it is easy to speculate on possibilities; were there any real chance of such a catastrophe occurring, it is difficult to say how we should act."

"I do not doubt *your* friendship Mesmer."

"Nor I yours, my dear Friakerton," said Biron warmly, "it is indeed a consolation amid the heartlessness and selfishness of the world to find one generous spirit on whose aid you

can rely in the most terrible reverses and most dangerous emergencies—and who can foresee the evils of the future.”

“It is indeed !” rejoined the unsuspecting Friskerton.

“Well,” thought our adventurer, “here is at least a resource if my great scheme should fail, and one too in which there is neither risk nor trouble, but to become dependent upon any man is but a *last* resource of Count Mesmer de Biron. No ! I will not despond ; it can, it *must* succeed ! but I will not think of work to day. *Nunc est bibendum !* with to-morrow’s dawn I’ll lay my train, and get my powder ready. And now for pleasure, merriment and wine !”

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CHAPTER V.

THE STAR AND GARTER.—EOTHEN.

“ ANCIENT of days ! Illustrious of inns ! Thee, Star and Garter, we revere ! Soft recollections of our schoolboy days steal o’er the recollecting mind, like rosy dreams from distant lands. Yea memory throws a halo round thy dinners, smelt through the vista of past years—when juvenile delight exulting hailed the well-known carriage at the iron portal, the coachman’s longed for livery, the cold stern

father's visits rare and far between, the sympathetic comrade's shout, "Run, run, your governor's there!" the selfish supplement—"ask for a half holiday!"

The butler's calm announcement of the fact at which our young blood boiled, the rapid toilette, the wondering stare to hear that master's praise, fall in the father's credulous ear, from lips which daily had been wont to breathe, anathemizing canes and fierce birch rods, and use them too at times, with daily dirge o'er mangled *Hecuba* and hapless verbs in *m*!

Away! whisked on by the paternal steeds, we reached the bright hotel—a stroll upon the terrace, or in the park, questions, laments, and little marked advice, with messages from home, from fond mammas, and fair and gentle sisters—see, tis time!

The smoking soup, the gurgling wine—how schoolboys eat! how long restrained voracity bursts forth in pruriency! We had not then seen foreign lands, and foreign cooks, and

table d'hotes luxuriously famed, or gone the round of London dinner parties, and clubs and restaurants—and white bait dinners. We had not groaned in woeful biliousness, or wildly raved of indigestion's nightmare, we had not, seized by panic dread of getting stout, condemned ourselves to diet spare and thin, with systematic exercise. Those were the golden days of appetite and health; of court and camp we neither knew nor recked, but to our youthful minds the Star and Garter was a palace grand, its fare, a thing for unsophisticated reverence!

“Oh could those days return, and with them bear the zest and appetite of early years!”

“My dear Desmond,” exclaimed Colonel Rosmill, “for God's stop, or you will talk me dead with your poetical and culinary remembrances.”

“Indeed Rosmill I do not agree with you” said the young Duke of Gamblesbury. “I like those airy flights of fancy, which bear us

back through the cloudy paths, and over the misty bridges of the past, but I did not know that you were an improvisatore, Desmond?"

"Then in the name of all the muses, and St. Cecilia to boot, do not suspect me of so ominous a talent, simply because standing on Richmond terrace with the keen air of the valley blowing in my teeth, I wished dinner had been ordered half an hour earlier, and involuntarily gave vent to a rhapsody, appropriate to the circumstances!"

"But what objection have you to the character of an impromptu poet?"

"Fifty at the least."

"Give an instance."

"In the first place I should be expected to tumble at every *conversazione* or *soirée musicale*, I happened to be invited to."

"I do not see the necessity; you might refuse."

"The invitation?—true, I might imitate the example of two brother *litterati*, the well-known

—s, who when requested to lionize somewhere at very short notice, wrote to express their regret that one was engaged for that particular evening to stand upon his head in Grosvenor Square, and the other to grin through a horse collar in Hyde Park Gardens."

"No said his grace, I meant that you might refuse to improvise."

"Impossible without appearing morose or disobliging when gentle words from rosy lips pressed and entertained—no, I feel my yielding nature would give way, and in six weeks I should be victimized to a skeleton."

"A terrible catastrophe."

"One I am in no danger of realizing, not possessing the power your grace ascribes to me, but if you wish to hear a real improvisatore—?"

"I should like it above all things!"

"And so should I," said Colonel Rosmill, in Italy it is true I have heard them; but it is

"See Windsor?"

"Where?"

"There—but perhaps you are short sighted?"

"I am—very—and I have forgotten my glass."

"I shall expect, Friakerton, to see you pass the claret without filling, after that."

"Have you seen my niece, lately, Count?"

"Yesterday morning!"

"Quite well?"

"Charming—radiant—divine!"

"Time fixed yet?"

"No! most likely next spring."

"Why the delay? what is in Merlmore's head now?"

"Oh! I am to buy an estate, and make to myself cares and troubles before my time."

"Not a bad plan, it gives a man more position in the country."

"There's the waiter!"

"Dinner is on the table gentlemen."

"*Allons!*"

"I say Biron, Desmond tells me you are an improvisatore?"

"Then he is a Dutchman!"

The dinner was good, so were the wines, the guests were hungry, the champagne was iced to a nicety, all were in excellent spirits, and *repartees* flew about on all sides like sparks from a burning house. The dessert was on the table, filberts were cracking.

"I say, Sir John," exclaimed Friskerton "what was the name of the fellow who discovered the circulation of the blood?"

"Harvey," said the baronet, "but what is —"

"Harvey, eh? same man that invented the fish sauce?"

"No, that is I believe a more recent, though not less important invention."

"Well," said Friskerton, it was a fine idea, but the circulation of the bottle was a better, so pass the Rudesheimer."

"Have you seen the new book on the East, Biron?" said the Duke of Gamblesbury.

"What Eōthen, or Prince Puckler, or the Crescent and the Cross?"

"I suppose," threw in Friskerton, "that Mr. Warburton rode half way round, and then cut across the desert on his dromedary to judge of his book by the title. I got no further."

"Eōthen of course," replied the Duke without heeding the young peer's attempt at facetiousness.

"I have read it twice over" replied Mesmer.

"And your opinion?"

"I am in ecstasies with its freshness, its originality, its piquancy."

"Yes," rejoined the Duke, "it is a delightful book, so superbly divested of all pedantry, and boring descriptions of localities and correctness of former travellers, and, still more tedious, antiquarian conjectures."

"Is that Eōthen, you are alluding to," enquired Colonel Rossmill.

"The same !"

"Then permit me to say that I never read a book, through which there ran so exquisite a vein of humour, and facetious irony."

"I agree with you," said Desmond, "one is actually puzzled to know when the author is in jest or in earnest, his horror of 'utter respectability,' is *zum sterben* !"

"They say," said Sir John Nokes, "that K—— had it by him nine years before he published it—*nonum prematur in annum* !"

"A rare instance of Horace's advice being followed in these times said Biron."

"Do you know K——?" said the Duke.

"Slightly replied Desmond !"

"What sort of looking man is he?"

"Quiet, pale, brilliant eyes when he looks up, observant; in society the expression of his countenance is peculiar, we used to call him 'Devil K———,' at Cambridge."

"Ha, ha ! an excellent *sobriquet*; by the way, that reminds me of his bargain with the

magician at Cairo, to raise the devil, for two pounds ten shillings in the great pyramid—it was a pity the wizard died of the plague before the time appointed.”

“Had he known of the nickname to which Desmond just now alluded, a mirror would have saved him an incantation,” said Mesmer.

“I suppose,” said Friskerton, “that had the experiment been really tried, some poor devil of an Arab dressed up for the occasion would have undertaken the *role*, for that night only.”

“*For that night only—K———* would have sent a bullet through his carcass if he had, I am persuaded,” rejoined Biron.

“Perhaps the whole was but a plan to rob and plunder him.”

“How excellent is the description of his interview with the pasha,” said Mesmer, “on first crossing the frontier with his faithful portmanteaus and patient and long suffering carpet bags?”

"The interpreter's calling the would-be magistrate, a—possible policeman of Bedfordshire!" said Rossmill.

"I think I shall go to the East," said the Duke of Gamblesbury, "will you go with me, Biron?"

"You forget that——"

"Ah true—well you, Desmond, and Friskerton? what say you?"

"*Volontiers*," said Desmond, "give me a fortnight to correct the last proofs of my novel, and I am ready to travel to Kamschatka if you please, variety is my vital principle; I have neither wife nor children, thanked be heaven! and never mean to have any, if I can help it—except those in three volumes, which, instead of requiring attention, are so dutiful as to do something towards assisting their father and his, unfortunately, rather scanty rental."

"No going to the East for me," said Lord Friskerton, "it is so infernally cockneyfied!—"

“An excellent objection truly,” said Mesmer, but you have not read *Eöthen*—Oh! how in my early youth I used to revel in the dreams of the orient! how I used to long for the lance and rapid steed of a Bedoween chief! how my soul used to dwell in tents, amid lofty palm-trees and the winds of the plain! how my heart used to throb at the idea of plundering a caravan, of cutting off the heads of fat merchants of Damascus, and scouring the desert like the breath of an exasperated whirlwind! All these thoughts of bygone days are resuscitated in my imagination by the perusal of this extraordinary volume!”

“And do you still feel any of these wild and romantic inclinations?” inquired the Colonel.

“Not exactly, if I went to the East *now*—it would be to establish a dynasty.”

“Biron, my dear fellow,” said the Duke, “will you favor us with a specimen of your

extraordinary talent in improvising—it is no use denying the fact, we shall be infinitely your debtors?”

“Well,” replied Biron, “this wine is inspiring, choose a subject, and stop me when you are tired.”

“There is no fear of that,” said the Duke—“but we will leave the subject to your imagination.”

Then we are off on the railroad of rhyme!” said our hero, tossing down a bumper.

“Readers! if verse excites your aversion, skip the next chapter, and go on with the story.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

‘THE LOST CARSTERFIELD’—AN AFTER DINNER
IMPROVISATION, A LA INGOLDSBY.

“ I WILL tell you a story, then,” said Mesmer,
“ since you have left the choice of a subject to
my vagrant fancy ; a story of a droll adventure,
which happened neither in the course of my
own nor anybody else’s experience, the *facts*
whereof are utterly beyond the pale of possi-
bility, the characters wherein are drawn from
death, without the slightest regard to nature,

and the moral of which nobody will ever pay any attention to.

"In these respects it will be as it were the antipodes of our modern novels, so called (*lucus a non lucendo*) from the scrupulous avoidance of all novelty in their pages.

"I make these prefatory remarks in order to gain time to collect my ideas—but to my tale:—

I.

The way was long the wind was cold—

(See the lay of the ultimate minstrel, by Scott,
From which the first line I have ventured to quote,)
As about me a waterproof Chesterfield rolled,

I beat

A retreat,

Down Fuzzleton-street,

(A name in the blue book perhaps you'll not meet,)

{ Anxiously striving to keep on my feet,
{ Which was, owing no doubt to the fast falling sleet,

By no means so easy a task as it seemed,

Whilst with thoughts most confusing my fantasy
teemed,

Indeed most people think all that follows I dreamed.

II.

However to place
The true state of the case,
More clearly before the intelligent gaze
Of my Lord, and the Colonel, Sir John, and your
Grace,
And last, not least, Desmond, I here should avow,
That I came from the house of my friend Harry
Bowe,
Where some friends had been kicking up rather a
row,
On the strength of his wine,
Which was varied and fine,
(His chateau Lafitte,
Like Sib's wit,
Is divine !)
To be brief, he had asked half a dozen to dine,
Each his intimate friend,
And the evening to spend,
In a way the society called the tea-total,
Might perhaps not approve of—viz., over the bottle.

III.

The clock struk two !
I scarcely knew,
Where I was, nor appeared there a cab to my view,
Colder and colder the night wind blew,

Tighter my Chesterfield round me I drew,

My fingers were freezing,

My nose took to sneezing,

Each moment less pleasing,

Became my condition,

ceman of—any division,

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ed, and fell flat in the mire !

IV.

coherently.)

* visions !

divisions—

r—wine—girls—politicians !

V.

ed my eyes,

surprise—

inspiring bright hopes now

he blast,

d past,

ast,

e,

inscription I read,

r remember, it ran—

With a ghastly grin,
 And ironical mien,
 Cried the shady conductor—he spoke, in I sprang,
 And the door—'twas a coffin lid—shut with a bang,
 While a choir of professionals, lately deceased,
 In dismal tones,
 Half shrieks, half groans,
 “*King Death is a rare old fellow,*” sang.
 When they stopped, I “applauded what they had
 done,”
 Said, the ghost of a concert was capital fun,
 And as present affairs stood, secure of a *run*,
 In fine, I expressed myself very much pleased,
 But could not help saying with critical air,
 “No doubt but the fellow is *old* enough,
 But as for *rare*—ye sextons!—*rare* !
 (When we know that the churchyards in London
 can spare,
 Such very short leases to those who go there)
 I must roundly declare—
 It's all stuff !”

IX.

But perchance you may think that according to
 rule, I
 Ought to have quivered,
 And shaken and shivered,

And even to 'Herschel' the go by had given
On our road to the—Archangel's, kicked out of
heaven,

By gravity's law being no-way confined,

We soon distanced even the comets and stars,

Still onward, still onward, still onward we flew,

When the phantom cad a shrill horn blew,

Our course was done,

The goal was won,

"Ladies and gentlemen—Charon's pier!"

Said the shady conductor, "ve gets out 'ere."

XII.

Out they tumbled, that spectral crew,

Figures unearthly and strange to view,

In garments, to judge by appearances, new

When the earth, in the days of old Noah, was
flooded,

And they trod, with their skeleton feet, on the toes

Of the grim looking cad, and although he alluded

To 'paying the fare,'

I judged from his air,

That the same in the passage across was included,

Indeed when he found we would not be imposed on,

He pressed an appeal for a 'tip' ev'ry ghost on.

DR.

!

s ready for starting,

an extent,
egged to invent,
for transporting
in to consult
as soon the result

l artillery,
umbugged by Milton,
ronized Sillery,
be built on)
t of tin foil,
effects of a boil,
thy digressions, for,

o embark.

ashing !
ashing !

What elbowing, muttering, squeezing, and crushing,
What a state some are in,
Who find out they've no 'tin,'
Net the ghost of a check upon Coutts or on Glynn,
One gentleman ghost—quite a spectre of fashion—
To 'work his way over' the stream, volunteers,
But Charon declines it, expressing some fears
Concerning his knowledge of steam navigation,
When the ghost consigns Charon to (shocking !)
damnation,
And walks off in the ghost of a furious passion !

XVI.

The passengers' faces
Wore rueful grimaces,
No wonder—considering where they were going—
Till Mercury brought up a couple of cases
Of brimstone cigars, which he called *Acherontic*,
And sold them without hesitation upon tick,
(To Hermes the money no doubt is still owing)
These were flavoured with some antimonial physic,
And made all the ghost-smokers morally seasick !

XVII.

At length we landed,
On shore I handed,

"I have never heard anything like it since poor Theodore," said Deamond.

"I do not believe Hook himself could have done it," said Friskerton.

"Your friendship blinds you, Friskerton," said Biron *modestly*; "but of course it is impossible, on the spur of the moment, to avoid errors in versification and even in grammar."

"Well, really," said Sir John Nokes, "I have taken it down in shorthand, and I think even as a matured *jeu d'esprit*, you have no cause to be ashamed of it."

"It is most extraordinary," said Rosemill, "you ought to have it published."

"I will get it into the ——— magazine, if you like," said Sir John.

"As you please," said Mesmer laughing. "I make you a present of the valuable copyright, the more especially as had you not condescended to take it down, it would have been lost to the world for ever."

"Do you mean to say that you could not repeat it if necessary?"

"Certainly not—not a dozen lines."

"Wonderful!"

"Yes," thought Mesmer, "it *would*, perhaps, be rather wonderful if I had not had it all written down at home on superfine foolscap!"

THE IMPORTER.

CHAPTER VII.

BLACKHEATHIANA.

1a. Adolphus Cashall inhabited a small but comfortable house at Blackheath. It was species of detached villa, with iron railings round of a garden, limited in extent to the size of an ordinary dining-room, which said size were rendered uncomfortable to be looked over, by the spiky nature of their contents. Moreover, there were venetian blinds to the windows, and two cast-iron scrapers at

the door of curious and antique manufacture.

On his way to this Blackheathian abode, as journeying the illustrious Mesmer, Count Biron, with objects in view hereafter to be developed. But before we introduce either him or the reader to the interior of Mr. Cassell's villa, we shall take the liberty of filling a page or two with digressive observations in a manner at once, instructive, discursive, and interesting.

Like many other sage young gentlemen of the present age, it has been our fate to see a great deal more of exotic climes than of our own. With every disinclination to acquire that geographical information, which, to our mind, has a vile tendency to destroy the poetry of travel, by setting bounds and limits to the roving flights of an exuberant imagination, we have been as it were *volens nolens* compelled to imbibe from the dull pages of John Murray's everlastingly recurring hand-

books, which glare redly upon the wanderer's lusty eyes in every corner of the accessible globe, certain general topographical ideas relative to certain countries and cities we have travelled through or visited, whilst with regard to our own dear native land we still remain in happy ignorance upon the subject.

Since we abjured jackets and lay down collars, our experience of Great Britain and Ireland, with their divers and various insular satellites, has been confined chiefly to a few country seats, houses, and cottages of our acquaintance; two or three watering places of popular repute, and certain streets and squares of the metropolis, including those oases in the sirocco blowing desert of civilization, the parks of Hyde and Regent; but of *Blackheath* we do happen to know something—we spend a day there occasionally with a most excellent friend, whose mind comprehends breakfasts, and who indulgeth in a taste for poetry and cricket—presuming,

rotundity, the zest of travel is gone and chained like monkeys to a post, we must content ourselves with threading in imagination the starry labyrinths of heaven's expanse, and lament with Archytas,——

Nec quidquam tibi quod est,
Ærias tentasse domos animoque rotundum
Percurrisse polum——morituro.

Morituro!—to die! Will death release us from this thralldom? We will not say '*lasciate ogni speranza,*' nor will we quote a passage from Goethe which just occurs to us as opposite, nor a line of Euripides, nor extracts from half a-dozen authors in as many languages all admirably applicable, but leaving the reader to give us credit for their reminiscence or not, as he pleases, proceed at once to our brief remarks upon Blackheath, after which, placing our trust in Providence, we hope to get advanced the main subject of this our veracious

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to exerted.

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get there, if you c
our own, is either t
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a hospital and inn
and brown bread ar
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to eat them and loc
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at which we unde
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whom he decline

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outhful and Sunda
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spot—on paper—
end, and created,
our resuscitation.*

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upon the body--

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was nailed,
Sexton.

that night,
tre,
-like this—
tor, &c.

a history, peculi-
ies, with the road
l is the only guide-

his hospitality, and
e a couple of verses
a supposed murder

book to Europe, a man of sentiment ought to carry in his pocket. Let what we have written suffice for Blackheath.

By the way, Mesmar drove down in his cabriolet by quite a different route, or we might have alluded to him in our narrative.

His zealous tiger, Sago, gave the door-bell of Mr. Adolphus Cashall's house a tug, which brought forth a peal that frightened the whole neighbourhood, from their propriety, so much so indeed, that some of them never got back to it again, and two elopements and a seduction took place in the course of the next fortnight.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CATASTROPHE.

THE door was opened by one of those universal geniuses so abundant in the metropolitan environs in whom the offices of groom, foot man, gardener, and coachman are laboriously focused, and of whose duties 'the whole duty of man' is but a minute decimal fraction.

His face was red with exertion, and his arms were but half inserted into the sleeves of a

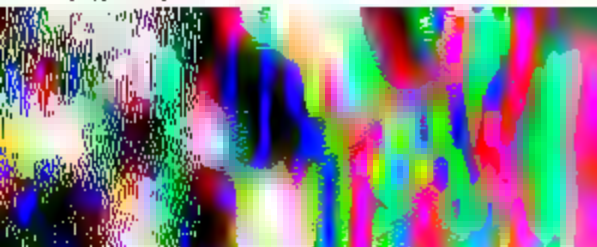
unnecessary ; I have come here upon a pure affair of business, and excuse my saying so — do not care a straw about the propriety or impropriety of your conduct, past, present, or future. I have merely a few facts to communicate to you, which are, I imagine, worth your trouble to listen to."

" I am all attention sir."

" Mr. Guy Merlmore, in whom the hereditary taint of insanity had already, as you were aware, slightly exhibited itself, lent to you, at the recommendation of his solicitor, Mr. Monville, on mortgage—"

" Sir !" exclaimed Cashall, his countenance becoming livid, and cold drops of sweat bursting from the pores of his forehead.

At this crisis, a piercing shriek of agony and fear resounded through the apartment, the shadow of some falling object for a moment intercepted the light of the window, and a beautiful child, of about two years old, lay dead upon the gravel walk, in front of the



CHAPTER IX.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

FOR more than two hours Mesmer de Biron sat alone and unheeded in Mr. Cashall's drawing-room. He heard however the moving of feet, the murmur of voices, the slam of the street door as the servant ran for the doctor, the ring of the doctor on his arrival, the distant sound of Mrs. and Miss Cashall's hysterics—when all was still.

ought the

man without a conscience, "why could not the child fall out of the window and break its nasty little neck yesterday, or the day before, or to-morrow, or the day after?—But no, it must happen precisely on the day I choose to come down, and at the very moment when I was getting to the marrow of my story and most of all wished to avoid interruption. However I cannot be helped, I will not leave this if I can possibly avoid it, without getting my business settled. After all, a thousand pounds is not to be earned without trouble!"

At length Mr. Cashall re-entered the apartment. The deadly pallor of his countenance was the more striking from the coal black hue of his hair and whiskers. His clothes were spotted with blood, and his eyes rolled feverish in their sockets.

"I trust," said Biron "that the child still lives?"

"No sir, he is gone; his death must have been instantaneous."

me out without interruption, it will save useless discussion."

"I will do so. Afterwards I can reply."

"Of course—well then, I was observing that you borrowed five thousand pounds of Mr. Guy Merlmore upon mortgage of certain houses."

"It is a d—d lie, an infernal, slanderous, and malicious aspersion!" thundered Cashall.

Biron twirled his moustache, and replied calmly, "you had better command your temper, hear me out, and then reply."

"Sir!" said the *cidevant* bankrupt, "is this a fitting time to choose to attack the honor of a ——?"

"Mr. Cashall, there is nothing dishonorable in anything I have as yet mentioned I have accused you of no crime; supposing I were about to do so, and you are conscious of being innocent, surely this agitation is perfectly unnecessary."

THE IMPOSTOR.

"Go on air—go on."

"Mr. Guy Merlmore was about to leave England; it was contrived by Monville and yourself that instead of signing a deed of mortgage he should sign a deed of partnership."

"Sir! do you mean ——"

"Listen to the end," said Messmer sternly. "One deed was read to him, he signed another, you were accessory to the fact; he was gone abroad, his health was bad—his subsequent insanity favoured your ingenious scheme, and he was ruined. His previous eccentricity counted for his not having mentioned the speculation, or consulted his friends. You were a bankrupt, paid twenty shillings in the pound, robbed Guy Merlmore of his all, and I, your generous assistant, was left to clear up the mess."

He *proved* air," and
e."

7, "and I have

THE IMPOSTOR.

proving them, I have witnesses at my

known than to others?" inquired the
ant eagerly.

Mr. Cashall, it is known to none but
and Mr. Guy Merlmore himself, who
care and skillful psychological treat-
rapidly recovering."

said the bankrupt, "but you said
vidence—witnesses of this—slander-
ation."

e ceremony! you are already compro-
ave already acknowledged the fact—
your confession matters a whit; I
esses as I told you just now, to prove
much more than I have stated; and
they are in possession of, and can be
attest, at a moment's notice, facts
uld suffice to condemn both Monville
elf, without the shadow of a prospect
but they are, and but for me, will

THE IMPOSTOR.

rogue, and transact business without going into a passion,"

The features of Cashall worked convulsively, and his hands were clasped like an iron vice, but when he was fixed upon the ground, he did not venture to regard the impassive countenance of his tormentor, whose gleaming eyes alone betrayed the internal fire of his spirit.

"To resume," said Biron, slowly, "I require two thousand pounds."

"Two thousand? impossible!"

"Let me have a cheque for that amount, and I will engage to meet it within three days, and all witnesses remain in eternal ignorance of the value of their evidence. Guy Merlmor comes a raving maniac for life, and is committed to the tender cares of a private asylum in a remote county, where even the sane are liable to incurable madness, whilst from my memory the secrets, the knowledge I have obtained, vanish for ever."

"And what guarantee have I that you will keep your word."

"Honour amongst thieves!" said Mesmer carelessly.

"Enough—I *agree*," said Cashall with a malignant smile.

"Let the cheque be made out in the name of Richard Johnson," said Biron.

Cashall left the room, and shortly returned with the cheque in his hand. Biron examined it carefully, it was perfectly correct, and crossed, which of course would render it useless to a footpad or highwayman, in case, as Cashall observed he should be robbed in his way homewards.

"Then in three days I may present it."

"Yes," replied Cashall with the same smile of diabolical malignance.

"You swear never to betray me?" said Cashall.

"I swear—and now farewell. I mean to walk to the inn for my horse, as it is getting

late. I do not suppose we shall have either inclination or necessity to meet again in this world?" added Biron, as he carefully buttoned up the cheque in the breast pocket of his coat."

"I think not," replied Cashall, sullenly.

It would be difficult to convey to the imagination of the reader the look of vindictive and concentrated hate with which the ex-merchant regarded the lofty form of the Count as it receded from his view.

"It had become night time, and there was no moon in the heavens."

"I wonder," muttered Mesmer, "that he gave way to my demands so easily, without even beating me down in my price, it is quite surprising conduct in a tradesman, he did not look chicken-hearted either; however, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say in Coccagne—the cheque is not yet cashed. So it is half a mile to this infernal inn—I wish it were not quite so dark!"

CHAPTER X.

THE MURDERER.

"NEARLY one-fourth of my hard earned fortune gone at a single crash!"—

"No!" muttered Casball, grinding his teeth, "I will bribe this smooth, wily fiend in a way infinitely more effectual!"

The ex-merchant was indeed wound up to a fearful pitch of excitement, the sudden and threatening accusation, the fearful death of his child, the heartless villany of his un-

by the same road to the drawing-room, without anybody being aware of his absence.

To form this design, to seize the poker, to rush into the garden, careful nevertheless not to step heavily, or disturb any furniture in his passage, was the work of an instant. A man both thinks and acts quickly under the influence of excitement.

"On second thoughts," muttered Cashall, as he paused for a moment to unlock the garden door, "I must rob him too, that suspicion may fall upon a common foot-ped—bell and damnation seize this rusty lock!"

CHAPTER XL

THE STRUGGLE.

"I AM glad it is over," thought Biron
"I detest anything that is business-like, and
I hate violence, whether physical or moral
These two thousand pounds if I get them,
which I have little doubt of, will enable me
to go on gloriously! But I must not allow
a trifling temporary success to interfere with
the prosecution of my grand scheme.

THE IMPOSTOR

a sneer of contempt—but to resume my monologue—I am an Epicurean, and consequently the object of my life is to crowd as many agreeable sensations into the brief space of this sublunary existence, to discover and enjoy the highest intellectual and sensual delights that earth affords. Now it does appear to me, that, yielding a blind obedience to the moral code, which time, precedent, and society have established, by any means conduces to this sacred and desirable consummation.

“ I find myself the denizen of a globe, for which, to judge by analogy, and I have reason to suppose myself an exception to ; I am destined to be swept into oblivion at the expiration of some four score years at the utmost. I find this globe tenanted by millions of beings like myself, a few of whom monopolize the produce and goods of the earth, whilst the rest are doomed to toil laboriously for shelter, clothing, nutriment, absolutely essential to their existence.

common herd, arrived at this plain conclusion, I proceeded to put my principle into practice, and what are the results?—I am Count Mesmer de Biron, the favorite of fortune, the idol of fashion, the successful lover, and, the master spirit of my age.

“Let but *the* scheme succeed, continued the daring egotist, and what brilliant prospects reveal themselves to my prescient gaze, what object of earthly ambition will not be within the range of my hopes!

“Now suppose I had been what the world calls a *moral* character?—I should never have burnt old Milford’s will, never have bought Colonel Hoosmills house, never have obtained an introduction to society, never have been engaged to the angelic Augusta Merlmore never have obtained a cheque for two thousand pounds from that black whiskered rascal Cashall—I should have been a poor devil of a shopkeeper, or a clerk, or enlisted a

Meanwhile Biron had recognized his foe-man, and at a glance of thought comprehended the object of his attack. This gave the Count great annoyance. Not on account of the attack itself or the loss of his hat, but because it tended to prove that the sacrifice of two thousand pounds was a far more serious misfortune to Cashall than he had supposed. Indeed, Biron had considerably over-rated the ex-merchant's savings, (or rather cheatings) which previous extravagance, bribes to people about him during the bankruptcy affair, and the exactions of Monville the attorney for 'dragging him through' his difficulties had materially diminished.

"I must be merciful," muttered Biron, "or I may spoil all"—and he commenced fanning the countenance of the fallen man with his handkerchief.

"Spare me!" said Cashall, huskily, "I was maddened by the suddenness, the——"

"My dear sir," said Mesmer, kindly,

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conclude that you are playing me false—and mark me! I do not bungle in *my* schemes of vengeance—you are a ruined and disgraced man, and a *felon*, on whose fate the laws of your country must decide!”

“But suppose,” said Cashall, timidly, half regaining his self-possession, and the habitual low cunning of his nature, “suppose I expose you in my exculpation, suppose I declare to the world our conversation of to-day.”—

“Fool!” said Mesmer, contemptuously. “do you imagine that the word of the bankrupt tradesman, the detected swindler, would weigh ought against that of the rich, the courted, the distinguished noble? What would your tale be deemed but malicious slander, when *I* told how, after tending poor Merlmore in his fearful malady with the care of a son or an affectionate brother, I gradually revived the dormant powers of his brain, and restored his shattered intellect, how then I gleaned from his disjointed conversation the

counsel as to what has happened—let the cheque be paid by the time appointed, and you may not only rely upon my silence, but on my gratitude.”

“ I am much obliged.”——

“ No words, when the time comes, remember Count de Biron, meanwhile, forget that you ever beheld his form, and above all entertain no delusive idea that you have it in your power, even in the slightest degree, to injure me, or that you can attempt it, *however secretly*, without my knowledge. My eye will be ever upon you, at home or abroad, to a *Jesuit chief* all places are alike visible—adieu !”

These last words sunk deeply into the heart of the ex-merchant, he reeled homewards as in a dream, partly from what he had heard, and partly from the effects of the fall, which had stunned him. With every inclination to betray and injure, he no longer felt any power to cope with the dark spirit he had just parted

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CHAPTER XII.

THE FRIEND IN NEED.

"SAGO," said Mesmer, drawing in his panting horse, as after a rapid drive, they reached Charing cross, or Trafalgar Square, as it is now called, a little before midnight; "I shall take a stroll, and walk home afterwards."

"So saying, he threw the reins to his servant and bent his steps across the square. The cab and tiger dashed along Pall Mall, the latter

murmuring an air from Bunn's last opera
 that daring fabricator of poetical doggrel---i
 as a ballad sung by a wandering troubadour
 for the amusement of some robber queen in her
 own royal cavern, and the first verse ran as
 follows :---

"Prince Belezebub dwelt in a darksome cave,
 And fed upon Lucifer matches,
 And warbled at night an occasional stave,
 Or fragment of blasphemous catches," &c.

"Trafalgar Square, at the time we write of
 and this story is not exactly antediluvian in i
 late---was a vast area, surrounded by massi
 edifices, amongst which the royal academy
 painting, an anomaly in architecture from
 want of taste and proportion, occupied near
 the whole of one side. Nevertheless the da

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IMPOSTOR.

to sympathise with my
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f your destiny."

on?" said Ramsay, starting
come by the tone of kind
y in which the strange

ius," replied the strange
those damp stones would
death from cold."

ber that voice," murmured
th, gazing vaguely at the
le.

think you remember it!—
o a poet, and such an excuse
myself!" replied Mesmer
rously offended egotism.
Biron!" exclaimed Ramsay

ied Mesmer, "and I inter

IMPOSTOR.

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certain portion of gen
eeling at the bottom
but rarely succeeded
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usuality, by which the
le understood huma
I had analysed with
e motives, passions
mankind—they were
le moved his world
; his conduct was
consideration of both
' that unfortunate

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the servant
and you car
artistica an
p"

patron wort
his liberality
an easy, get
of obligatio
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and the superiority of his occasional burst of eloquence, argument, or a quietly im- instruction, in which his and experience were as- matism or pretension. The his own shallowness in com- ofundity of his entertainer, rees to look up to him for spect him without feeling or envy at his superiority. his cards well ; not that his Ramsay was entirely feigned ght interest in the young at time he had met him and though principally deter- ing him his tool in the he had formed, was really or him some assistance in

t long over their wine, and e drawing-room, Biron too

have already described, they were fixed and glassy.

Mesmer then proceeded to ask him various questions, to all of which he gave very rational replies. He then caused him to read a letter through another sheet of paper, and to walk with him about the room, and finally, having first tried several other curious experiments he produced several packs of cards, and commenced dealing them after the manner of a *croupier* at a gaming table, asking Ramsay each time, before dealing, which would be the winning card; with scarcely an exception the *clair-voyant* was right in his decision, and the delight of Biron was evident in every line of his features.

At length he awoke the somnambulist and asked him whether he remembered anything of what had passed.

"Nothing whatever," replied Ramsay in his usual tone.

"How do you feel?"

"Calmer, better altogether."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GAMBLING HOUSE.*

THE chandeliers burnt brightly in the gorgeous saloons, and the polished mirrors reflected alike the forms of the rich, the titled, the distinguished, and those of the ruined desperado, and the needy adventurer. Men of all nations thronged the brilliant apartments, the smirking Frenchman, and the grave Spaniard, the *legère* Italian, and the stiff Englishman, women

*See appendix.

too, there were, young and beautiful, old and ugly, all there to seek the transitory and feverish excitement of the green cloth covered table and the blind goddess fortune. Some quaffed in haste, to slake their burning thirst, the iced champagne punch so plentifully offered; others stood abstractedly, and calculated for the hundredth time some delusive series based on the imaginary law of chances, a few paused to risk a napoleon or two at the childish game of roulette, but by far the greater number crowded round the tables at which *rouge et noir* was played with eager eyes, and cards to prick the chances with, and hearts beating high with covetous aspirations—by Lucifer! they are but as the rest, who court ambition, trade, finance, all gamblers—though by some the game may be prolonged from the cradle to the tomb, whilst *these* prefer to know at once their fate and simplify the principle of human struggles. Such was the scene in one of the first gambling houses in Paris, in the year of the Hegira —

At one of the tables were seated two individuals whose extraordinary good luck as it was termed, excited at once the envy, and astonishment of the spectators, and the dismay of the *banquier* who stood an unobserved looker on, and beheld with horror the constant success of the two gamblers, whose luck was only equalled by the imperturbable *sang froid*, with which they swept up their winnings. Neither of them were *habitués* of the place, on the contrary, nobody had ever seen them there before. They had entered the room, taken the first vacant seats of the table, and in a short time commenced playing for the very highest stakes, with a silent devotion to the game, yet utter freedom from all excitement or anxiety as to the result---unusual even in *professional* gamblers.

The elder of the two was a tall man, somewhat corpulent, and in appearance, between thirty and forty years of age, his hair was tinged with grey, bushy, and stunted, a grey

mustache adorned his upper lip, and he wore a pair of broad-rimmed spectacles, behind which flashed a pair of eyes so large, dark, and brilliant, as scarcely to seem in need of any assistance from the handywork of the optician. His dress was somewhat *outrè*, and he wore a massive gold chain rather ostentatiously displayed, as well as a variety of rings upon his fingers. He had a habit of wrinkling his forehead by incessantly elevating his eyebrows, and a bright red flush upon his cheeks, and on the tip of his nose seemed to indicate—that he was not averse to the worship of Bacchus, in spite of the present calm deliberation of his manner.

His companion appeared very young, though it was difficult to judge of his physiognomy, on account of a large green shade which he wore over his eyes, and the great size of his shirt collar which on either side reached nearly to his ears; he was dressed in fashionable style,

and was of a thin figure, and shorter stature than the elder gambler.

These two persons evidently played in partnership, and although the taller of the two invariably bought the counters, and took up the money, it was remarked that he but rarely interfered in the management of the game, and that generally with ill success, and to the evident vexation of his companion. At length he entirely ceased to meddle with the other's play, merely taking care that none of the actual coins should come in contact with the fingers of his friend. Meanwhile he of the green shade continued to play without rule or system, calmly pushing the stakes from *rouge* to *noir* and from *noir* to *rouge* with an instinctive sagacity, which astonished the banker and the dealers, and in spite of the absorbing interest in their own games, by degrees, attracted even the attention of the other gamblers.

“Faites votre jeu, messieurs !”

“ *Rouge* wins—*sacre bleu* ! are they never to lose ?”

“ What extraordinary luck !” murmured an old officer with hard, weather-beaten features, who had lost all his money, and was reluctantly reduced to be a mere spectator instead of an actor in the scene before him.

“ *Faites votre jeu !*” said the *croupier*.

“ Another hundred napoleons—quick—stay, two hundred in counters !”

“ ‘*cré nom de Dieu* ! it is incredible !”

“ *Peste* ! if I had brought another thousand *livres* with me ! muttered the officer.”

“ Again ! *vraiment c’est miraculeux*.”

“ *Carrajo* !” murmured a Spaniard.

“ *Bismillah* !” quoth a Turk.

“ *Blitz Donner Wetter noch einmal* !” growled a German.

“ *Corpo di Bacco* !” an Italian.

“ Damnation !” swore an Englishman, as once more *noir* proved the winner.

Nine times the *noir* had won!—without a

symptom of hesitation the calm player pushed the accumulated stakes to the *rouge* side of the table. A smile of triumph illumined the countenance of his companion—three times *rouge* was victorious—the player with the green shade once more transferred his confidence to *noir*—another moment, the eyes of the elder gambler rest like basilisks upon the dealer—*noir* wins! and the bank is broken!

At that moment the player with the green shade gave a stifled groan, his limbs became rigid, he slipped from his chair, before his companion, who was stuffing the notes into his capacious pockets, could stretch out his arm to assist him, and fell heavily to the ground.

“Over excitement,” said one.

“Reaction,” said another.

“A glass of water,” said a third.

But the stout player hastily stooped down and touched the face and limbs of his comrade with something he held in his hand—apparently a large door key—he revived—he raised himself

upon his elbow, pushed back the green shade from his eyes, and gazed vacantly around him.

“Where am I, what is ——”

He stopped abruptly, the eyes of his friend who had pushed back his spectacles upon his forehead, rested for a moment upon his face, he gave vent to another stifled groan, and sank back insensible.

The elder gambler raised him in his arms, and laid him upon one of the luxurious sofas with which the rooms were surrounded.

“My friend is subject to these fits,” said he hastily, and with an English accent “he will be well directly,” and in truth the younger gamester soon sat up and opened his eyes though with a strange and vacant expression.

His friend pulled the green shade over his eyes, and muttered something about ‘weakness, and the strong light’ for the benefit of the people who crowded about them.

“Can you walk now?” said he.

“Yes” replied the young man, “I can.”

Thereupon the two successful gamblers quitted the saloons of ——— together, the younger leaning upon the arm of the elder, at the door they entered a fiacre.

“*Hotel du Diable !*” said he of the spectacles —and away they rattled.

“Who were they ?”

“Nobody could tell !”

“*Lucky anglais !*”

“*Sacrés animalux !*”

“They were *his* eyes I could swear,” said an Englishman of a meagre and cadaverous aspect, though not naturally ill-looking.

“Whose ?” enquired a Frenchman by his side.

“The devil’s !” replied the Englishman, sharply, not being aware that he had spoken aloud.

“These English are all alike.”

“I do not understand it”—muttered the cadaverous Englishman, as he walked away. If it is he—why this disguise—but if it be—he

has been the cause of my ruin, he has baffled my schemes—Oh! could I be revenged!—all other hope is vanished!” The light of a lamp, which, at this moment, he passed, fell full upon the countenance of Monville, the attorney. .

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RETURN.

“So far good !” murmured Biron as he was whirled along upon the road, from Paris to Boulogne, behind four post horses whose postillions were ‘doing their possible,’ under the influence of francs abundantly promised. Mesmer de Biron was in disguise and alone.

“So far so good—my toils are over ; happen

what may—a man is always something who has more than fifty thousand pounds at command, yet what is fifty thousand, or ten times fifty thousand pounds to *me*, possessed of the secret of exhaustless wealth !

“ Still it is vexatious that after succeeding so gloriously at Aix and Wiesbaden, this infernal accident should have happened I allowed myself to be carried away by the triumph of the moment, and the touch of those accursed Napoleons threw him into the cataleptic—bah ! that was nothing, but his waking—that single glance around—he might have been made to believe it all a dream—I could almost regret—but no ! repentance is folly—the past is irrevocable !

“ Let me look forward to the delights that await me—power, splendour, fashion—Augusta. An estate must be bought ; I must make myself popular in the county, get into the house, and—but we live in the

present — and I suppose we stop here to dinner.”

On arriving at his house in — street, the Count, no longer in disguise, went straight to the studio of his youthful *protégé*, Ramsay, and gazed upon the half finished painting on the easel with a smile of gloomy and peculiar meaning.

He rung the bell; Sago replied to the summons.

“ Let this room be restored to its former state without delay.”

“ Mr. Ramsay, then will not return to complete the development of his artistic production sir ?” said the sententious valet.

“ He will never return to this house, at my desire ; let it be done at once.”

“ Very well sir,”

“ And light me a fire in the library.”

“ Yes sir.”

“ It feels chilly, or I have caught cold

on my way from Devonshire !” said Biron rubbing his hands as the servant announced that the fire had been lighted according to his wishes.

Sago stared and shrugged his shoulders as he left the room. It was a sultry day in autumn, which would not have disgraced the dog days. Biron repaired to the library.

Having first bolted the door, he drew from his pocket a packet of papers and a small brown paper parcel. The former contained the passport, cards, and a few letters and papers of one Joseph Smithson, merchant. The latter, on being opened, revealed to the eye a grey wig and a pair of broad-rimmed spectacles, all which Mesmer consigned to the flames, and carefully watched until not a vestige of them retained their original form.

He then took his hat, went out, and without requiring as might have been supposed, the presence of his own vehicle, repaired to his

banker, broker, and solicitor, (a highly respectable firm in the Temple) with each of whom he remained a short time—the Count had a clear head for business---after which he dined at his club, and finally took tea at the Merlmore's, to the inexpressible joy of Augusta, who had been in the sulks for the last fortnight—that is to say, ever since he left town, had teased her mother almost to death, and broken seven strings of the piano forte.

“ And where have you been all this time ?”

“ Oh ! I have been terribly busy looking at places to be sold, and hunting over papers. To-morrow I must be off again to —— shire, to look at the Wilsdown estate, which is to be sold immediately, and will just suit me, I imagine ; what say you, Augusta, to being Lady of Wilsdown Castle ?”

“ The name is charming.”

“ And romantic---well, I think it will do it is a fine old place, I hear.”

“ Nothing like the landed interest for power and influence,” said Merlmore.

“ And nothing like ready money for enjoyment !” laughed Biron, “ by the bye, will you go down with me to look at the place to-morrow ?”

“ How do we get down ?”

“ By railway ; a couple of hours, and half an hour’s drive afterwards.”

“ Ah ! those railways have spoilt all rational travelling.”

“ They are a phase in the developing of the human race.”

“ A link in the chain of necessity.”

“ Come and see my last new drawing,” said Augusta.

“ Where is it ?”

“ In the next room.”

“ Here, look, what do you think of it ?”

“ That your beautiful curls, falling over the paper, throw rather too much *chiaro*

*oscu*ro over the subject ; I must kiss them aside."

" Mesmer !"

" Dearest Augusta, shall it be this day month ?"

" This day——"

Her mouth was hermetically sealed by the lips of her lover.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WEDDING.

THE marriage took place in St. George's Chapel, Hanover-Square, and Augusta Merlmore became the happy bride of Mesmer de Biron.

The Count looked magnificently handsome ; his clear, pale, spiritual complexion, large, brilliant eyes, and long, dark hair and moustache, joined to his lofty stature and aris-

tocratic, almost fierce bearing, were voted by the ladies present *nem. con.* without a dissentient voice, the perfection of manly beauty, whilst the delicacy, softness, and expression of Augusta's features, her silken ringlets, her cream-coloured skin, and enamel-like neck and shoulders, the perfect contour of her form, and the exquisite minuteness of her feet and hands rendered him at the same moment the envy of every man beholding her, whose blood was yet unchilled by the icy influence of satiety, age, or the withering cares of the world.

Happy girl to marry such a man!—happy man to obtain a wife so lovely! Young, handsome, rich, and fashionable, what more can they desire! Such were the reflections of more than one spectator of the interesting sacrament—pshaw! ceremony I mean. For God's sake, reader, do not take us for Puseyites and Jesuits in disguise.

Prince Aurelius de Rosenberg had been in-

vited to the wedding ; at first he felt disposed to decline, but his pride came to his aid. " She shall not imagine that I am grieved," thought he, so he went. He looked pale and sad, notwithstanding his efforts to appear the reverse. Never had Augusta seemed so beautiful as at the moment she became the bride of another—a forbidden fruit to his longing soul. Perhaps that was one reason why he felt that he would have given the universe to have plucked it.

" The deed is done, then," said Aurelius as they left the chapel.

" Done ! why my dear Prince !" exclaimed Colonel Rossmill, " you speak of it as if getting married, were the most melancholy thing in existence."

" That depends upon—"

" Cerebral development of—?"

" Upon circumstances too numerous to enumerate."

" Ah !" said the Colonel, I never could get

the Count to let me feel his head ; but with such a wife as Augusta !—”

“ He must be happy—*must* be, or he deserves to be hanged, drawn, and—” the Prince stopped ; he recollected that he was a philosopher.

Biron and Augusta were on their road to Wilsdown Castle, in their new travelling carriage, with patent everythings, and Sago and a lady’s maid in the rumble. For some time they were silent ; at length Mesmer said, taking the hand of his bride in his own—

“ I wonder, Augusta, what people generally say under similar circumstances ?”

“ I am sure I have no idea.”

“ It is a very odd thing to find oneself united for all eternity, and shut up together *tête-à-tête*, in a green travelling carriage !”

“ Very !— pray, don’t kiss me, Mesmer ; consider, people can see us, pray—”

“ My angel love, that is easily remedied by drawing down the red blinds.”

“ But dear Mesmer, I think—”

“ What, dearest ?”

“ I am afraid that it is not—that is—not exactly.”

“ Well, my love ?”

“ Not exactly proper.”

“ Sweetest girl !” rejoined Biron with a smile, eagerly imbibing with his eyes, the beaming love that streamed from her beautiful orbs, and regarding with transport, the blush that mantled on her virgin cheek, “ I love you more than words can tell—where else could I have found such innocence, such beauty, and such intellect combined ! and you, Augusta, tell me do you really, truly love me as I do you ?”

“ I love you with my whole soul,” and the beautiful bride half buried her face upon the shoulder of her husband.

Wilsdown Castle was a fine old place—a place that seemed made for a grand seignior—

nothing *pavenu-ish* about it. No stucco—no whitewash—no green-painted railings. Norman gothic, of massive and extended dimensions, its grey stone solid walls, rose with picturesque *hauteur* from the side of a rugged hill. It was just the thing Mesmer wanted, and he bought the whole estate a bargain for less than forty thousand pounds. It produced a clear eighteen hundred a-year.

Advantage had been taken of the locality to lay out the side of the hill in the most fantastic gardens, full of grottos and archways, and picturesque effects ; fountains, too, there were, and sea-nymphs, and a stuffed lion in a cave, munching a human skeleton with other effects, the production whereof had helped to ruin the late owner of the Castle.

“ Oh, how delightful !” exclaimed Augusta as they strolled through the grounds together, the morning after their arrival.

“ I am glad you like the place.”

“ Nothing could be more charming ; I should like to live here for ever.”

“ So should I, dearest,” said Mesmer gaily, “ with you and love ; but you see that skeleton—here ! *memento mori*—but that is a disagreeable subject ; what think you of the Castle itself ?”

“ It reminds me of the days of chivalry, and you look like some knightly baron of the days of King Arthur.”

“ Indeed, I thought I bore my years pretty well,” said the young Count laughing, “ but I must consider myself a *verde antico* from this time forwards. It is a venerable pile, eh ?”

“ Very venerable,” said Augusta looking playfully in his face, which wore an expression indescribably comical.

“ Endeared to me by reminiscence, too,” said Biron in a tone of solemnity.

“ By reminiscences ?”

“ Yes ; this place originally belonged to my—the family from which my mother was descended.”

“ Indeed, that is delightful.”

“ Yes, it is lucky,” said Mesmer with that peculiar smile of satisfaction he ever felt in the concoction of a lie, it makes one seem less mushroomified in a neighbourhood. “ I hope you will not forget to tell every body of this little fact, my love.”

“ Most assuredly I will not, if you desire it,” said Augusta.

“ I command it by virtue of my right as your lord and master,” said Mesmer with mock heroic dignity.

“ May your shadow never be less, most mighty Caliph !”

“ In another hour I shall have no shadow at all, if the sun-dial is to be credited.”

“ Ah ! that is the reason I so love the

Arabic and Turkish phraseology ; they do outrage probability so delightfully."

" To show their independence of spirit, I suppose, before being bastinadoed !"

" After all, England is the only land of liberty—*dear* England !"

" You may well say *dear* England ! and you are right in calling it the land of freedom—for the rich and powerful—to which class we happily pertain ; but believe me, my love, for the poor, wretched, obscure, unfashionable devils, there is not a more hard taxed, hard worked, despotically governed land on the face of the globe. However, we will not talk politics the day after our wedding, and it is useless to give ourselves the trouble of sympathising with evils we cannot remedy."

Augusta felt sure that Biron was jesting when he made this hard hearted remark. He was not.

“ Take care you do not slip, Augusta ; the path is rather steep.”

“ Oh I am a perfect chamois.”

Diana herself could not look more bewitching !

Enough of this small talk.

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHANGE.

BEFORE Biron had been married six weeks there was a vacancy in the representation of the neighbouring borough.

Our adventurer immediately resolved to become a candidate for the seat. Such, however mis-directed, was the energy of Biron's character, that as long as the objects he had proposed to himself as the end and aim of his

ambition were unattained, he was totally incapable of enjoying, for any length of time, that voluptuous state of tranquillity in which more than a month had now passed away. He did not feel positively *ennuyé*, much less unhappy ; but his ever restless spirit longed to emerge from inglorious inactivity to invent, to lie, to deceive, to plot, to conquer, and to triumph. To get into parliament was at present his greatest desire, and an election held out the greatest hopes of excitement.

He imparted his design to his wife.

Augusta was all enthusiasm.

“ I shall write to your father and the Colonel and Friskerton, and beg them to come and stay with us if possible ; one wants friends about one at such a time.”

“ And suppose, dearest, we were to ask the Scales. You know Cecilia has just inherited some property in the county, although the house is let for some time to come.”

“ By all means, write to Cecilia yourself.”

“ And what do you think of Mrs. Bernard Tullamore ?”

“ True, she will do for Friskerton to flirt with ; I must now write to my solicitor to send me down a sharp electioneering attorney ; I will gain the day if I spend ten thousand pounds !”

The interior decorations of the castle were in excellent order, having been renewed throughout by the former proprietor ; the rooms were of magnificent size and splendidly furnished. Biron's establishment was small, but well arranged. Sago was in himself a host, and to him the Count first confided his intention of having visitors at Wilsdown, and putting himself up in nomination for the borough.

“ The Count,” said Sago to the housekeeper, a pretty widow of some eight or nine and twenty, “ contemplates the reception of divers and various guests of high degree ; he likewise purposes to get into the British senate, if the

electors will have him, which, of course, they will ; for he is a fine, noble-hearted individual, though he certainly *did* drive over the old crossing-sweeper !”

“ And pray, Mister Sago, what is the upshot of all this speechifying ?”

“ As the delegate of my lord, I am instructed to communicate to you his desire that chambers be prepared for—”

“ Yes, I understand, for the people that are coming ; I wish, Mister Sago, you would speak out like a man, and not beat about the bush so when you have anything to tell me.”

“ Fair lady of the keys and cupboard be not a-wrath with your devoted slave—”

“ If you do that again !” said the pretty housekeeper, “ I’ll—”

What Sago did, or what the housekeeper intended to do, is of little import to our story.

In due time the guests arrived, and Castle Wilsdown became all gaiety and movement.

Dinner parties were given to the neighbouring gentry, and dances to their daughters, and Count Mesmer de Biron began to make himself as popular as he had projected, in the county where of old his maternal ancestors had held so distinguished a position as everybody knew, from the very best authority.

Draggletaile, the largest landed proprietor in the county. He had expected to carry the day with little trouble or expense, and was excessively annoyed when he found that there was to be a contest. He was a very young man, younger even than Biron, and had made himself very obnoxious to all classes, by the excessive arrogance of his manners. To appear amiable was utterly out of his power; Biron, on the other hand, left a favourable impression everywhere he went. With the middling and lower classes especially he understood how to ingratiate himself, and what pledges to make in order to gain the hearts of the shopkeeper, and the mechanic. His external appearance too did much towards ensuring him the support of the female moiety of the village, his graceful and polite manner more. His former life had shown him, in vulgar phrase, where the shoe pinched, at any rate where it was imagined to do so. His canvass was, on the whole, successful, aided as he was by all his friends, in the

"Why so? I can but *vote* for one at a time'

"No, but you ought in my humble estimation to represent the views of your constituents."

"How is that possible, seeing that in a general way they have none at all, or views so confused, unenlightened, and contradictory that it would be absurd to think twice of them. The only real principle of a poor elector is that he wishes to be better off than he is; now while property is so unequally divided, and in the hands of so few, which the country is so burthened with taxation necessary to pay the interest of that political incubus, the national debt, and whilst individuals are so infernally selfish you perceive there is not much hope for him.—When I get into the House I intend to vote for whatever appears to me beneficial to the country, and more especially the class I belong to—at present the thing is to get the opportunity of voting."

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To obtain these ends I am compelled to use the same means as the rest of the world, and after all, I think you will allow that the borough could be better represented by me than not at all?"

"No doubt my dear count—but do not misapprehend me, I merely wish to know ——"

"I understand—quite right—of course I should be very sorry that you should assist in upholding principles you disapprove of, but as I said, the borough could be better represented by me than not at all—for everybody knows that the Honorable Mr. Wigman stutters, and is a terrible blockhead—most likely he would pair off for the session."

"I think that 'pairing off,' is a disgraceful custom. A man ought to be compelled to resign his seat who wishes to evade his duties."

"Very true, I shall be found at my post, 'watching and praying'. Ah! here comes our foe in his carriage—and damnation! There is that scoundrel Monville by his side."

The rival candidates bowed politely as they

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"The Countess and Cecilia have done you good service, I imagine," said Scalea.

"Excellent! I only hope their promises have not amounted to downright bribery—I warned them not to *give* anything as it would be buying votes *against* me, and perhaps worse. By the way I must tell Sago not to forget about those eggs to pelt the Wigmans with to-morrow."

"But is it quite, I will not say gentlemanly, but ——"

"Pooh! all is fair in love and elections! you will never get into parliament, you are so absurdly fastidious!"

And hark ! — a strange sound breaks the silence of the night—it is the lion, roaring in his den, in the zoological gardens—distinctively we can hear him—how he must long for freedom and the desert !—Again he roars—suppose he should break loose—what consternation, what dismay !—Rat, tat, tat, tat ! that infernal knocker next door—It is no use to attempt poetry in London—down with the window-sash — another roar, by Jove !

We have drawn our writing table up to sofa. Thou needst not grin at us, thou bald, skull-like phrenological head. Nor you, ye plaster poets, on your brackets.

We are—*tonnerre de dieu* ! the lamp is just going out, or this chapter might have run through half a-dozen more pages. 'Tis such a seductive subject ; but darkness threatens, and we illuminate our chamber candle.

opportunity of doing Biron every injury that lay in his power. That there was something peculiar, nay, suspicious, about the conduct of the new lord of Wilsdown he had sufficient acuteness to perceive. But in what that something consisted was to him a mystery.

If it *were* really the Count de Biron, whom he had encountered in the *maison de jeu* at Paris, it was certainly a very strange circumstance. Why should he have gone there disguised? Was he an unfair player — a swindler in fine? But no, there was no possibility of cheating the bank — he staked his money fairly and he won — certainly his luck was most extraordinary — yet the same things have happened, and still frequently happen to many others. And again, who was his companion, that mysterious individual with the green eye-shade, who seemed so calm yet so absorbed, who played with such unhesitating confidence, and fell down in a fit when all was over?

advantages which wealth confers upon the youth and early struggles of its possessor. His father had been in very straightened circumstances, and the young lawyer had had to fight his way through a host of difficulties. Devoid of principle, his fear of the world's opinion, the value of which he estimated rather professionally, than as a man, with a morally responsible soul, was his only guide to virtue; temptation was thrown in his way, debts pressed heavily upon him, he thought he could sin in safety, and he yielded, he became like hundreds before and after him—a rogue. He prospered, and just began to see the road to fortune opening before him, when the entity of Mesmer, like a dark cloud, overshadowed his destiny. He lost his clients, everything went wrong, even Cashall—Cashall, whom he regarded as at all times an infallible resource, had turned restive and unmanageable, had replied to his threats by menaces equally dangerous, and asserted with unexpected boldness, the brother-

London; I have matters of importance to communicate.

“B.”

“It must be from the count,” muttered the lawyer, “what can he want with me?”—but it is useless to guess where all is mystery; I will go at all hazards—perhaps some light may be thrown on the Parisian adventure. I wonder—supposing it to have been the Count de Biron—whether he saw *me* as plainly as I imagine myself to have seen *him*!”

It was almost dark as the attorney set out for the place of meeting. He found the Count standing by the side of a superb black horse, of immense size and apparent strength, well consorted with the tall and powerful form of its rider, who was dressed in the same sombre and monotonous livery.

All was silent around, no breath of air disturbed the leaves of the trees, now yellow with the fading hues of Autumn. Dark and

to parliament, I shall send you a cheque for two hundred pounds.

"Sir!" said Monville, "do you mean—"

"I mean what I say—let us have no acting—I know both you and your principles, and there is nobody else at hand to be humbugged I repeat—you shall have two hundred pounds, in the event of my carrying the election, and your affording me every assistance in your power, without compromising yourself with the other party."

"Two hundred pounds, in my humble opinion," said the lawyer striving not to feel himself overawed by the cool tone of superiority and conscious power assumed by Biron, and speaking with deliberate sarcasm, "two hundred pounds is not much from so eminently fortunate a personage as the Count de Biron."

The emphasis laid upon the word, fortunate, was slight, but marked, nor did it by any means escape the observation of our hero.

gamblers—fortunate gamblers who break banks at Parisian hells, and win as much in an hour as honest industry rarely gains in a life time. These are the men I call fortunate."

"Not a bad definition ; you are a man of the world, Mr. Monville ; but this is the time for business, not for abstract speculation ; I do not understand the emphasis you lay upon the words *gamblers who break banks at Parisian hells*, perhaps you will explain."

"You were, I believe, about a month ago at Paris ?" began Monville.

"Then you were quite misinformed," replied Biron coolly, "I have not been out of England since I was born."

"Then I was mistaken," replied Monville carelessly, "though the likeness was certainly very striking."

"The case is not uncommon," said Biron, "but where was it that you saw this striking likeness ?"

Now Monville, above all things, wished to

probability was he (Biron) the hero of the tale as conjectured. If, on the other hand, he interrupted the narrative impatiently then was the probability in favour of Monville having been deluded by a mere likeness, which, as the Count observed, was not an uncommon case.

In tracing upon paper the winding mazes of human thought and reasoning, the historian is at times compelled to abridge, within a space that may be perused in less than a minute, that which in reality occupied hours, days, months, or even years, whilst, *au contraire*, as in the present case, he is often obliged to extend over pages, the reflections which dart like meteors through the brain, and possibly absorb an almost inappreciable period. The whole train of ideas detailed above flashed with the rapidity of light across the mind of the attorney.

Upon that hint he spake—

“ A short time ago business called me to

dation ; “ but excuse my saying that it is much longer than amusing ; the only point in it appears to be the likeness of this lucky gamester to myself ; I wish it existed in reality instead of in your imagination, and if I understand you rightly, you seem more than half to suspect the identity ? ”

“ Well, I must say that when a curl of dark brown hair escaped from under the wig, and he had taken off his spectacles, I could have sworn that it was yourself in masquerade. Not many men, Count de Biron, have eyes like yours.”

“ You are complimentary,” said Biron sarcastically, and two flashes of light seemed to issue from the darkness of his countenance.

“ The moustache, too,” persevered Monville, “ although grey (a little chalk would easily effect that) was precisely of the same shape.”

“ Indeed ? ”

“ And the height—”

“ I presume you carry a foot rule in your pocket.”

"Now," said our hero aloud, "if you please, Mr. Monville, we will return to matters of fact, and drop all allusion to mysterious gamesters in disguise, and such irrelevancies. I have made you a fair offer—"

"Of the *fairness*, perhaps, the less that is said the better, but you seem to presume that I am to be bought like a horse or an ox, that I have no conscience—"

"I have none myself, for I am convinced that it is a useless incumbrance ; as for your being bought, I presume, of course, that the best bidder may have you, were it Beelzebub himself."

"One would think I were conversing with a near relative, if not the master of that illustrious personage."

"No compliments sir, lawyer; as I said before, you are to be bought by the best bidder. What does it benefit you whether the Honourable This, or Count That gets the seat, provided you obtain a well filled purse. Self-preservation is the first law of nature."

“Surely,” thought Monville, this is some fiend from the abyss sent upon earth to be my tormentor ! everything seems known to him ; secrets he arrives at in ways the most unaccountable, yet most natural ; would that a whirlwind would sweep him from the earth ! or—”

It is a curious fact, that, notwithstanding their different dispositions and opposing organizations, similar circumstances produced both in the minds of Cashall and Monville the selfsame idea—the idea of freeing themselves from the bondage of a demon in human form, by the commission of one of the most terrible misdeeds of which humanity is capable. Thus was Biron not only criminal in his own person, but the cause of crime in others, to parody the saying of Falstaff, if we may venture to do so, with reference to so horrible a subject. But the attorney, though possessing infinitely less physical energy than Cashall, had a far greater share of moral daring ; he could not,

your head to spread, even by communication, to a single person, the ridiculous story of my likeness to this gamester you spoke of, as, although false, it might obtain credence from its very improbability, and injure my reputation, I shall be seriously offended. That it is false a little reflection must convince you, for were I desirous of gambling, what necessity for disguise? Am I not a free agent? master of my own actions? But, mark me, if this imaginary likeness should seem to you more convincing than my word and all rational reflection, keep it within your own breast or a tale may go forth built on somewhat less airy foundation relative to a certain Monville, gent. one, &c., which may lead to his being provided with a free passage to an unmentionable colony. Enough, be discreet and true, and you will find that you serve no ungrateful master!"

So saying, Mesmer vaulted upon the back

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION.

ELECTIONS have ever afforded a fertile field to the imaginations, or perhaps it would have been more correct to say memories of that branch of historians at present so popular with the reading world and who, as the Count, whose adventures we recount, so truly observes, have been most unaccountably denominated novelists.

Novelists!— and do these ‘self styled, writers of new things,’ tell us of travels in far distant lands, of strange adventures in unheard of localities, of wondrous customs and mysterious beings to gods that dwell not in the pages of the Pantheon. No! the *novelists* leave lying, which should be considered their especial vocation, the legitimate travellers, and as for a bold dash to the regions of fantasy or even antiquarianism (they rarely get beyond or rather behind the middle ages) it is not to be thought of— Mr. James speaks of the novelists of the present age, and of course there are exceptions to prove the rule— Harryatt and Bulwer to wit, but the majority seem positively to strive which shall excel in the description of all that is utterly common-place, fashionable, or vulgar.* See

*It is a notable fact that almost all James’s heroines are brought up with his heroines, and a tender passion formed as it were in the cradle; this simplifies the invention of a plot, for it is only necessary to separate the little dears by some casualty, let them

in drawing rooms, boudoirs, parties at country houses, plots based on family pride or pecuniary inequality (how agonising it is to the feelings of a sensitive reader when Edward Fitz-something cannot marry Emma Something-dale, because her pa is a lord, and his (poor devil!) only a wealthy baronet, or because Edward has got ten thousand a year, and she only nine!) then for an incident—scarce things in your modern fashionable novels—a restive horse, a devoted cavalier catching it by the bridle—*voilà une situation intéressante!* a little used up, it is true, but all the better on that account, assuming the principle to be true that it is most amusing to read of that with which we are most familiar. One very remarkable peculiarity

youth go through an adventure or two, and the lady endure a sufficient quantum of persecution, from her rich old rival, preparatory to uniting them for ever in the last chapter—and the thing is done.

in these modern offsprings of genius is that the hero, by courtesy, of the tale, is generally one of the least interesting characters in the book ; like the honorary secretary of a society, he has a real secretary to do all the heavy work, and this in novels chiefly falls upon the shoulders of some mysterious rascal or super-ingenuous valet, who interferes with his master's affairs in a way, we, for our part, should kick him out of the house for. Well, having abused all our *confreres* in the most approved fashion, it now only remains for us to praise ourselves. In the first place we *do* flatter ourselves that some uncommonly odd events occur, here and there, in the course of our veritable history, (we do not pretend to be a novelist;) secondly, we venture to believe that our hero with all his vicious eccentricities is, *par excellence*, the hero of the book. Thirdly, we feel pretty certain that the inscrutability of our plot will baffle the conjectures of the most astute and experienced of novel readers. We may raise a ghost,

or murder our heroine in the very next page for ought he can foresee to the contrary.

Elections, as we were saying, have been a great deal be-written; we shall therefore be as brief as possible in our notice of the contest between Count de Biron and the Honourable Wigman. We shall not enter upon any narration of the secret wiles and open violence perpetrated by the partizans on both sides. We shall not write an '*Isis revelata*' of the ingenious modes by which bribery was proved to be not bribery, and corruption exercised under the disguise of every virtue, faith, hope, and charity inclusive. Or how dead men were polled, and live men prevented from voting. We shall not narrate how Mesmer de Biron mingled in disguise with the hostile committee, and how Monville contrived, whilst outwardly working miracles, by his activity and ingenuity, in favour of the Honorable Wigman, in darkness and stealth, still more miraculously to aid and abet to the utmost of his power the dreaded Biron.

incessantly (all different tunes) in order to drown his voice by their discord, were knocked to pieces by the mob, and made into a bonfire. These and many other wonderful things we are contented merely to hint at, leaving the rest to the exuberant fancy of the generous and indulgent reader.

Suffice it to say, that he gained the day by an immense majority, was declared duly elected, chaired enthusiastically, and toasted with ninety times ninety, at a most splendid dinner in the evening. In rising to return thanks, it were needless to speak of his urbanity, wit, and eloquence, nor would we for the world suspect the noble Count of forgetting to allude to the prominent position formerly occupied by his maternal ancestors in the county. He felt, he said, as if he were returned to the home of his fathers, and the halls of his mothers, and his feelings were really almost too much for him—he was young and enthusiastic—he hoped soon to be prime minister—but whether he was or

CHAPTER XXVI.

TOO LATE.

It was not until Augusta was lost to him for ever that Prince Aurelius de Rosenberg became aware how deep an interest she had excited in his heart. He passed the evening after the wedding in a state of feverish restlessness.

The idea of her absolute and unrestricted possession by another, was too horrible for

a delusion, I scorn and despise more deeply than words can tell—and she is really wedded—for ever united to this young butterfly count, this shallow, flirting coxcomb—but no, I will not be unjust, he is younger and handsomer than I, he has intellect, grace, a manly bearing, all this I acknowledge, yes I will give him his due, after all, he is but the innocent cause of my misery—and yet it is useless to disguise from myself the miserable conviction that to my own indecision, rather than to his successful rivalry, I owe the loss of every earthly happiness. I feel she would have loved me, that it needed but a little relaxation in my cold, unimpassioned manner to have induced a reciprocal feeling in her breast; but she looked upon me as a being without passion or sentiment, a morose philosopher, a thing to be *respected* Oh fool fool! what wretchedness hast thou prepared for thyself!

With a groan of agony, the Prince threw

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with whom I cannot sympathise. cannot go on, I will leave this dull travel through savage and unexplored—until death leads me to explore that which, from doubt of their existence, I voluntarily to enter. What profit, and science, since our happiness must depend upon the feelings. I have wasted my best years of my life in fruitless now——”

The next morning Prince Alexander Rosenberg was whirling away from the metropolis on his way to the highlands.

Nevertheless, when parliament met, and a new season recommenced, he more found himself in London, and of the soirees, and balls, and dinners great; himself giving soirees, and dinners—but then the Countess de la Belle of the season, was so irradiating by her beauty and her dulness of fashionable vegetation.

CHAPTER XXVII.**POLITICAL.**

On returning to London to fulfil his senatorial duties, Biron at once distinguished himself by the splendour of his equipages, and the magnificence of his parties. His house, which was large and fashionably situated was now furnished with luxurious splendour. The number of his servants was increased

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humorously so called, appeared in annals and books of beauty without number--- is to say, provided nobody took the trouble to count them.

‘As beautiful as the Countess de Din’ became almost a proverb, and would have become so quite, but for the unaccountable jealousy of her rival goddesses.

“I am afraid, after all, my dear Lady C--- that you and I and Mrs. --- must go to Paris to get the question decided!” said the countess, gaily, as they were once looking over Aleath’s together, in the boudoir of the latter.

“The *golden* apple is given to you by emanation,” said Lady C ---

“No, no, I wave all pretensions to the throne of mammon.”

“We are not surprised at Venus Athisia, as Schiller says, *waving* anything from the daughter of the sea it is but natural

writings—The former are too personal, and the latter seem to want a distinct and self-conscious purpose. He points out evils without suggesting a remedy. Everybody knows that everything on earth *might* be improved, the question is, *how* is it to be effected?”

“Ah! here is Lord Friskerton.”

“What news, bold cavalier? you look—big with the fate of empires—”

“And of *Counts*,” completed Friskerton. “Oh! my dear countess, such a speech! such brilliance, such argument, such eloquence!—the opposition shivered in their seats—What was Burke, Canning and --- but comparisons are odoriferous as Mrs. Malaprop says. I knew it, I always said so --- the count will become one of the great guns of the ministerial party, B—— is a pop-gun to him. I never was so astounded in my life, you should have seen the face of the premier, he seemed doubtful which feeling to give way to, triumph

wishes to hop upon one
7."

the *monotony* would be
case, if my dim visions
djectives do not deceive

2, my dear fellow," cried
, "don't talk grammar;
n either lords or artists,
eople in that respect."

ot, as you dislike it ---
lle."

in the streets have been
ious in making slides all
that it is quite an art to
falling down and breaking

is a bad plan, walking
coaching animal, or why
—But I suppose you are
y ball to-morrow?"

ng extraordinary should
e; it will, no doubt be

"I accepted it of course, and told him to dispose in like manner of all my goods and chattels, game, cattle, in short everything that I had. To this he replied, that from a rich man such trifles involved no sacrifice, that he required something more of me, and what do you imagine that was?"

"I have not the slightest conception."

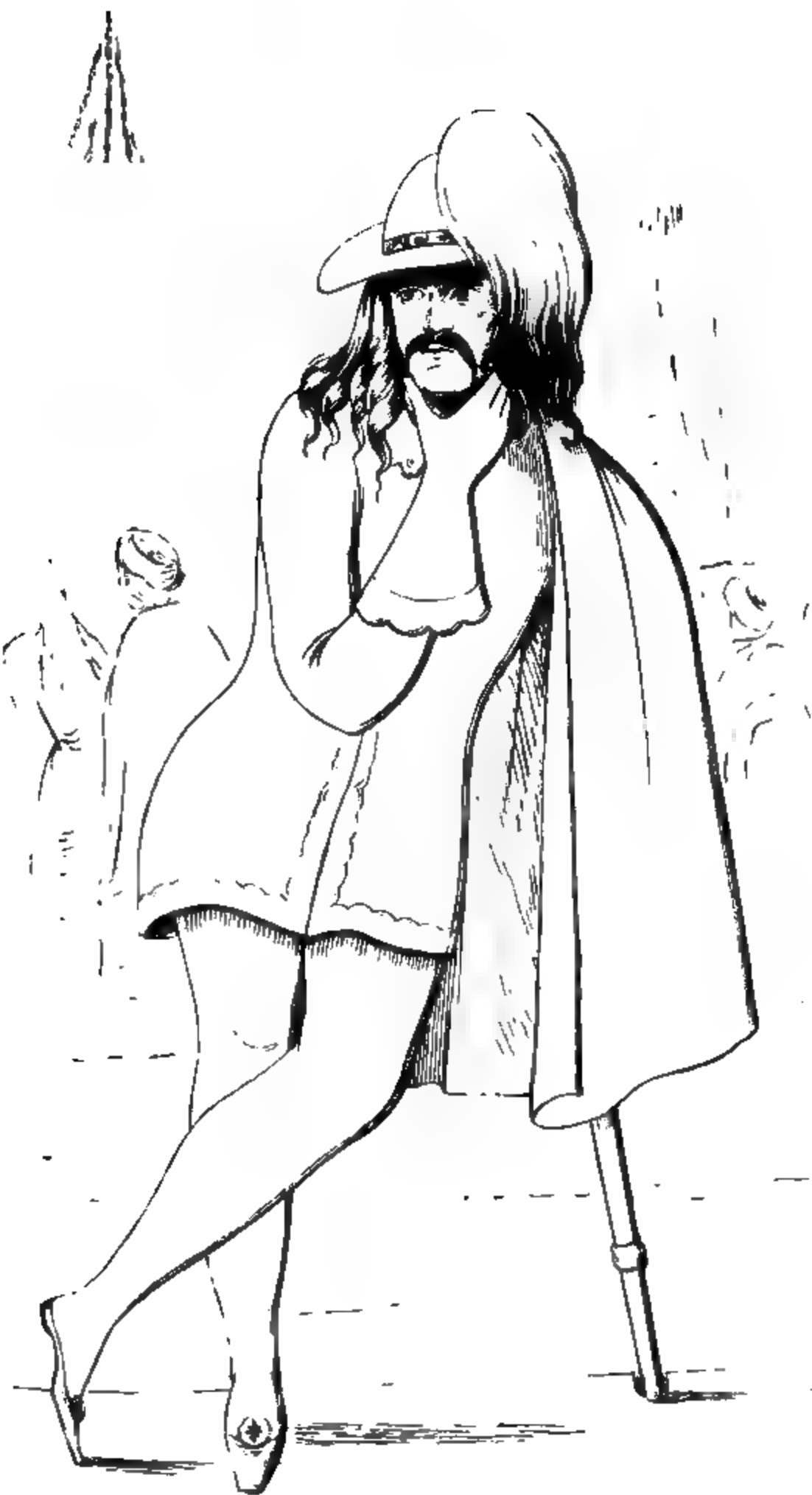
"Merely my influence in obtaining a peerage."

"Good heavens! what does Biron want with a peerage?"

"I am sure I cannot see, after having distinguished himself so brilliantly as he has done already in the House of Commons; young as he is, there is nothing that he might not look forward to."

"Nothing! he would be premier, if he played his cards well, by the time he was thirty——"

"There is not a doubt of his easily obtaining a coronet if he wishes it, they say that



plumed sombrero on either side, of a pale oval countenance, with features small, and regular, eyes large, and as it were, swimming in liquid brilliance; a fringe of dark brown whiskers surrounded his face, and a long moustache of like hue and texture overshadowed his upper lip; his open shirt frill, of the finest lace, displayed a neck of alabaster whiteness—a purple velvet cloak depended from his left shoulder; one hand rested upon the jewelled hilt of his rapier, the other on the back of the duchess's chair, over whom he bent in an attitude at once careless, and graceful, yet eminently calculated to display a form of almost faultless symmetry, which his close fitting costume of white and rosepink satin, set off to the utmost advantage.

“I trust,” said the fairy Queen, with a smile of ineffable fascination, that you have reformed, you perfectly shocking *morale* Giovanni, by this time, or really I shall feel quite unsafe in your company.

en having been married
er than herself, could not
ach regret at his decease
orthodox twelve months
coincided in opinion with
therefore inquired whether
commend for her fear

drew from his pocket
e offered, upon one knee

ted for an instant upon
aniard, but vanished
r Biron, whom the reader
recognised in the hands
not wont to reveal
I thoughts that occupied
rene, he smiled with
rn, half pity, upon her
us meaning he instantly

ook her head, mournful

at nine o'clock he died!
our delighted feelings, and
a verdant garden, on the
tiful Rhine,' with the
s, and the sun setting
l the seven purple moun-
d the labyrinth of those
and longed in the romance
ation, to be ourselves an
Years have passed away
used—aye, and suffered
innocence of our hearts
scarcely less incredible
[a whole legion of spec-
we then dream of the
s, the cold hearted and
ations, the avarice, the
rejudices of the profane,
Horace so aptly terms

dream of the cares, the

shrine—the tree of knowledge is not that of li)

Drum hab' ich much der Magie ergeben.*

Yes, magic—for to dare to seek, beyond the commonplace routine which *practical* wise men lay down, the mighty powers, invisibly pervading the universe, the wondrous attributes that spirit by which mortals are animated, and the mysteries of that eternity which immortal intelligences are destined to pervade, to direct the thoughts of others by a simple act of volition, to foresee the future by instinctive perception, to conquer pain, fatigue, and even inclination, in ourselves or others, by the sole power of a determined soul, *this* is to be a magician in the real sense of the word, and *this* is possible—aye more—it is *true*!

But to return to Schiller's *Armenian*, w

*Goethe's *Faust* first part.

CHAPTER XXX.

STILL THE BALL.

THE musicians, in the attire of troubadours, who were seated in a tent of crimson satin, now struck up a gallopade, and twenty or thirty most heterogeneously assorted couples were simultaneously whirling round the saloon. The fairy queen gliding along in the arms of her gallant host, whilst poor Friskerton looked on with a somewhat dismal expression of countenance.

"Why, *now* I account for it by the conviction that he is making love with all his heart and soul to the Duchess of Villereden. His conduct is most unprincipled!"

"I agree with you — and how *did* you account for his estrangement from his wife, so young, so beautiful?"

"Why, I *did* think that he was getting a little jealous."—(Biron jealous!)

"Jealous of what?"

"Of the Prince de Rosenberg's constant visits."

"The prince is very fascinating—for my part, I cannot see what the deuce the women see in him, but I have myself known five decided cases of the most desperately hopeless passions on his account."

"It is most strange! yet Biron is certainly more handsome, besides he is much younger."

"I do not know that that is exactly an advantage, and as for mere beauty, you know what Wilkes used to say on the subject?"

tone, no more of that, if you value my friendship !”

“ I do not understand what you mean by feeling of the wrong kind ?”

“ Have you then no morals ?”

“ I have been a good deal at Paris lately.”

“ Well, putting aside the question of the morality or immorality of the thing——”

“ Which from *you* certainly does sound rather too droll !”

“ Putting all that aside, I say, I cannot help fancying that in the Prince de Rosenberg I recognize a real philanthropist, a man who views things and people with a philosophic and impartial eye, with a spring of good and noble feelings at the bottom of his heart, ready at every moment to burst forth were they not restrained by a certain indefinable *hauteur* and respect for *usage du monde*. On the other hand, the Count de Biron, with many, undoubtedly, excellent and generous qualities, seems always to take an ironically

of the young nobleman's
h was before mere curiosity,
it of investigation, and Fris-
o become a man of by no
ntellect.

a voice behind them, "it is
he always stand in one's sun-
I mean—I wish you would
ray, sir—make way for a

o are you?" said Somerton
l himself rudely pushed aside
ek costume.

matus at your service—pro-
my bidding."

said Friskerton, not heeding
ook of the honorable Captain,
very person I wanted—do
deserve my eternal gratitude
sketch-book and pencil—I
me in my pocket on pur-

have him making a fool of himself if he goes on in this way much longer ! I will go and see where my Sultana is. Ah ! what happiness has been mine since Cecilia became my bride ! I wonder if it is possible that I should ever change like de Biron."

Meanwhile the Countess, escaping from the importunities to dance, with which she was assailed by Persians, Turks, Spaniards, Corsairs, Manfreda, and even the darkrobed Arimanes, had taken refuge in an ante-room, and throwing herself upon a sofa, was for a moment alone—alone with her own sad thoughts.

Her snow white, simple, classic costume, (she had selected that of an Ionian,) became her admirably ; one little white hand sustained her throbbing forehead, whilst the other arm, in its smooth, ivory roundness, hung dejectedly by its side ; and how much expression of the most touching sorrow lay

Perhaps a union of all is yet to be effected.

A tall monk, of the Carmelite order, had approached Augusta, and unobserved taken a seat by her side. A large hood almost entirely covered his countenance.

"Why so sad, fair Ionian?" said the Carmelite in a low, gentle tone.

"Sad!—ah! Prince Aurelius, I am glad to see you here to-night; but why have you selected so sombre a costume?"

"It is an outward sign of the inward state," replied the Prince calmly, but sorrowfully.

"You should not be so melancholy; I have observed of late that you have quite lost your spirits, and you look ill, too; it should not be so."

"They say that example profits more than precept—you too are sad?"

"Indeed, indeed, I am very unhappy!" said the countess, abruptly, with difficulty refraining from tears.

then my only friend, my greatest consolation?
O cruel fate! why is the spirit so strong and
the flesh so weak?"

It might have been, that Aurelius in part
divined the thoughts that were passing in her
mind, for he resumed in a calm tone,

"It is useless to dwell, my dear countess,
upon the miseries, which, since they cannot
be evaded, it is our duty to bear with fortitude
and, if possible, cheerfulness. Better therefore
it is to turn the mind from the contemplation
of the inevitable present to the distant glories
of the future, to elevate the spirit above the
grossness of material being, and endeavour
to pierce the wonders of the infinite."

"Oh, prince! how I love to hear you speak
of these things; there is indeed consolation
in the sublime aspirations you have taught me
to cherish! Would that Mesmer could share
them! but to him the grave is the ultima
Thule of existence—enjoyment is his only

which are, in fact, merely useful, as far as they tend to fix the faith and attention of the magnetiser, and by men of sufficiently powerful idiosyncrasies may be very well altogether dispensed with. I admit, however, that such men are of a rare order, nor do I myself pretend to such power. To this set I belonged—but belong no more.”

A sudden movement at this moment brought several people into the room where the Prince and Augusta were seated, the Countess was obliged to break off the conversation which so deeply interested her, and to smile and exert herself to exchange repartees with the fine ladies and picturesque dandies who came round her.

“Another time!” whispered the Carmelite, and glided away.

“Hem!” said Somerton, aside, to Lord Friskerton, “they were *tell à tell*, there is something in it I suppose. Ah, Countess!

from the asylum, they give me every hope of his recovery."

"Indeed I am very glad to hear it, of course you will go down to see Cashall."

"Of course! I shall go down to-morrow afternoon, as I think he must be in a very dangerous state—perhaps dying."

"Why so?"

"Because his letter was directed only by Cashall himself and blotted with tears—it was written in a female hand."

Mezmer bit his lips, and shortly after quitting the room, ascended to his dressing room, locked the door with his usual precaution, and seating himself at a table, drew a small writing case from a drawer, and indited in a skilfully feigned hand the following words:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have been expecting to hear from you for some time past, relative to the

length, he placed in the letter. No one would have observed its presence had they not been aware of the fact. He then folded the letter with consummate art, so that none of the powder might escape, placed it in a secure envelope, and sealed it with a black seal. After which he directed it to—

“ADOLPHUS CASHALL, Esq.

“*Private and confidential.*”

However ill he may be, thought Biron, he is too wise to allow any of his family to open private letters for him, lest some of his clumsy rascalities should be brought to light; and after inhaling the contents of that paper—I frankly give him leave to reveal whatever he may please about me, or my doings.—Now I suppose some men would feel embarrassed, guilty, conscience stricken, after doing a deed like this. Ha—ha! not every one is a Biron!

would have been regarded as a very unimportant virtue, whatever certain vulgar and extortionate tradesmen might have thought of the matter—it neither was, nor, to this day, ever has been paid for!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ACCIDENT.

ON their return to the dancing room, a most unexpected scene awaited the maskers. A mock quarrel, previously arranged, of course, took place between the Count and Lord Granville, the eldest son of the Duke of —, who was dressed as Sir Walter Raleigh ; he was second only to Biron in beauty of face and figure, and by many, even preferred as more manly.

His talents were undeniable, and he had written a novel which had attained to deserved popularity.

"Sir Walter, I defy you!" said Biron at length, in seeming exasperation.

"Then draw, senhor Don Juan!" retorted his antagonist.

In a moment a space was cleared, and the company prepared themselves to witness a most entertaining display of skill on the part of the two graceful combatants.

Meanwhile the music commenced playing, and a thrill of expectation ran through the crowd.

Scarcely, however, had they crossed swords, and exchanged a few passes, when a shriek of agony resounded through the saloon, and Lord Granville fell heavily to the ground.

"Good God!" cried Mesmer wildly, "my foil has broken off near the end and I must have wounded him!"

So saying, Biron dashed away his sword,

and threw himself upon the ground by the side of his guest.

“ He is dying ! run for assistance—Granville ! speak ! say you forgive me for this wretched accident ! ”

Lord Granville opened his lips for an instant.

“ I—” he began ; he could get no further, he squeezed the hand of the Count with a last feeble effort, and his soul deserted the body, which for but seven and twenty years it had animated.

“ He is dead ! ” said Mesmer with a vacant stare, “ dead, and I—oh God ! what misery ! ”

“ Dear Mesmer ! ” exclaimed Augusta, “ it was no fault of yours ; you could not help the foil breaking ! ”

“ We are all witnesses of the accident ! ” exclaimed Friskerton, and a hundred voices echoed his words.

At that moment the living man was more pitied than the dead.

“ No, no !” exclaimed Mesmer huskily, “ do not attempt to console me ; I feel already the pangs of despair ; people will point at me, and call me murderer ; I must die—die by my own hands !”

“ That would be madness,” said the Prince, and if for a moment a selfish hope found place within his mind, it was as momentarily repressed, and he said, taking Augusta aside—“ Let all fire-arms be removed from his room, and see that he does not obtain poison.”

Mesmer threw himself upon a sofa and appeared absorbed in the agony of his sensations. Augusta felt that she still loved him beyond all else on earth, and kneeling by his side, bathed his hand in her tears.

At length Aurelius and Friskerton took their leave—the dawn was already breaking.

“ I shall call to-morrow the first thing to enquire how he is,” said the former to Augusta.

“ I shall go, the first thing to-morrow, to

the Duke's, to give them the history of this terrible mishap," said Friskerton to the Count.

"Ah ! I shall be miserable until I hear that his family forgive me ; what *could* have put that unfortunate fencing idea into my head !"

"Do not lament the past," said Aurelius, "the idea was good in itself, and but for this misfortune, would have been lauded to the skies—farewell !"

"Farewell, Biron ; be a man !" said Lord Friskerton, in a voice choking with agitation as he hurried from the room.

Never for an instant did it suggest itself to any of the Count's guests that the death of Lord Granville was anything but an utterly accidental occurrence.



THE IMPOSTOR;

OR,

BORN WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ANTI-CONINGSBY."

PHRENOLOGICALLY ILLUSTRATED

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST. CAVENDISH Sq.

1845.

THE IMPOSTOR.

CHAPTER I.

DOWN AMONGST THE DEAD MEN.

Not far from Hampstead stands, or stood at the time we write of, a lonely cottage, or rather hut of the most miserable and dilapidated contour. It was inhabited, and in fact belonged to a man who, as he never was known to work or seek for labour, and avoided the society of his equals in society with morose repulsiveness, had acquired for himself a very evil report in the neighbourhood. The village

gossips imputed to him a taste for burglary, highway robbery, horse-stealing, and even burking, although as none of them had ever caught him in the act of indulging any of these *penchants*, the assertion was somewhat hazardous. But the characters of poor people are not thought worth protecting by the enlightened jurisdiction of this happy country; it is only for the rich that actions for defamation exist. However, Lionel Valence, for such was the aristocratic appellation of the owner of the hut, neither knew nor cared what was said of him. Like the libertine Don in the opera, he 'lived upon his money,' and it was surprising how well he managed to live, considering the wretched aspect of his domicile. The questions of the curious he treated with contemptuous silence, and when the pious curate of the parish, impelled by religious zeal, or the spirit of inquisitiveness, or both, called to remonstrate with him upon his non-appear-

ance in church, he asked him to take a cigar—positively suggested a *weed* !

“ A *what*, sir ?” said the startled clergyman

“ A real Havannah ; but, perhaps, you prefer a pipe ?”

“ This jesting is ill-timed ; I called to—”

“ This calling is ill-timed—and when a gentleman offers hospitality—what are you staring about you so for ?”

Well might the curate stare, for with the exception of a miserable bedstead and an old broken chair, the one room which the hut contained was utterly destitute of furniture.

“ Perhaps you would like to look under the bed and up the chimney,” said Valence with a brutal sneer. The dress of this man, which was of the best materials and quite new, formed a strange contrast with the bare and poverty-stricken aspect of the room. It may

he imagined that the pious clerk did not adventure upon a second visit.

But beneath this miserable hut were vaults of the most spacious dimensions, which, from a peculiarity of the situation, were perfectly free from damp,* and in these the eccentric and mysterious Valence made his abode.

It was night, and in the largest of these subterranean apartments were seated a man and a woman of the most striking exterior. We shall have occasion to describe them pre-

* Every body who has been "up the Rhine" must have visited the chapel at the Kreutsberg, where the bodies of some monks are exhibited in a most extraordinary state of preservation. I had a great toe of one of the old fellows—judging by his length, the abbot of the monastery—which I stole as a relic, in defiance of a local tradition of the dire punishment which once overtook another "Englander," under similar circumstances—a case of inevitable haunting ; but the story is, by this time, as Pistol would say, "base, common, and popular."

sently, meanwhile a few words as to the place in which they were seated.

There was a rude fire-place at one end of the vault, the chimney of which communicated with that of the hut above. A dead looking fire was burning in the grate, on either side of which sat the two persons we have alluded to. From the centre of the arched roof hung a lamp of antique form and black with age, which would have reminded those unversed in antiquarian lore, of the little black teapots in use amongst the lower classes, to which it bore a remarkable resemblance. This lamp shed a faint, flickering light upon those objects in its immediate neighbourhood, to wit, a table on which the preparations for an excellent supper, of cold meat and wine, were visible, but left the more distant parts of the vault in comparative darkness, so that on first entering, a stranger would not have perceived the stone coffins piled one upon another, by which two sides of the cavern were lined.

A door at the end of the vault immediately opposite to the fire-place, opened to further catacombs. The floor was covered with thick mats, and the entrance was through a trap door beneath the bedstead we mentioned as standing in the hut, and which was light and easily pushed aside ; moreover, it was so ingeniously contrived, that the most vigilant officers of the police might have searched the cottage without suspecting its existence.

The man we spoke of was tall, at least, he appeared so, from his extraordinary meagreness, though in reality he was not more than five feet and six or seven inches in height. His head was large and round, like the knob of a poker or a walking stick. His face was like that of an overgrown boy, large, squinting eyes of a blue so pale as to be scarcely perceptible, a mouth so small that it scarcely looked like a specimen of that useful feature, but rather reminded one of a hole burnt in

a sheet of brown paper with the red-hot point of the poker, whose head we have already used as a simile; his hair red, stunted, and wiry, overshadowed his low, unintellectual forehead, and eyes, devoid of eyebrows; and his nose was turned up in an oblique direction towards his left temple; his age was about five-and thirty.

He wore an old, threadbare, brown great-coat, and dirty white trousers, with boot-lacing up the middle, and round his neck a red comforter was twisted some half-a-dozen times. Reversing the laws of anatomical beauty, which directs that the limbs should be thickest at the roots, and gradually taper towards the extremities, the arms and legs of this creature resembled billiard queues, and terminated in hands and feet of most disproportionate magnitude. His *tout ensemble* conveyed the notion of hideous weakness and impotent malignancy.

The woman, on the other hand, might

almost be termed beautiful, her figure was of fine though voluptuous proportions, and her chesnut hair consorted well with her fair complexion and bold hazel eye. Her dress was slovenly, and so carelessly fastened, that it gaped in front almost to her waist, thus exposing a bosom of the most perfect shape and whiteness, on which the eyes of her companion rested, unperceived by the woman, who was wrapped in meditation, with a ferocious lust he dared not avow yet longed to gratify.

“ I wonder he does not return,” said the woman at length, in a tone of anxiety.

“ Who return ?”

“ Your brother, of course—who else could I mean.”

“ How should I know—perhaps some *friend* of yours.”

“ Friend! how should I have friends?”

“ You do not understand me.”

“ No.”

"I thought of the man I saw leaving here the other evening."

"Ah! you saw him?"

"Yes, I saw him, what did he come for?"

"What is that to you?"

"He was not ill-looking."

"Then he was not like you."

"I would be like him in one respect."

"What is that?"

The man started up and attempted to throw his arm round her waist.

"Stand back!"

"I will tell my brother of your visitors."

"I will tell him of your visitors!"

"Hush! I hear some one—it is he!"

"Beware—he would strangle you, if—"

The man whistled a discord.

The trap-door opened, a man of herculean frame and a huge, bronzed countenance surrounded by red, shaggy whiskers dropped into the vault.

"Ah! Li, is it you?" said the woman.

"Don't you see me," replied Lionel Valence, roughly—"but I am not alone, I have brought a friend with me."

"Ah! he follows your example," whispered the brother to the woman, with a malicious grin.

She retorted by a menacing frown.

"Come along, let yourself drop, and do not be afraid my buck!" said Valence, speaking to some one above, who hesitated to descend.

"But why cannot you confer up here?"

"Because it is necessary that we should trust one another, and if you hesitate, I shall send the contents of one of my *barrels* into your *hogshead*!"

So saying, the master of the hut pointed a pistol towards the trap door, whilst his brother and mistress, for such was the position of the bold lady, laughed most vociferously at his professional facetiousness.

Seeing that he had no choice, the person above at once descended in the same manner

as Valence, and was not a little surprised at the appearance of the place in which he found himself.

"Nice quarters?" said Lionel, with a laugh.

"Very," replied the stranger.

"You see those coffins?"

"Yes," replied the stranger, after a pause, and with a slight snudder.

"They contain the bones of my ancestors."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, in those stone boxes sleep the old heroes of my race—about here was their domain—they were never a very wealthy set—so they used to sally out from their strong tower and pick up the crumbs that providence threw in their way. I am the last of their race, I am aristocratical, a conservative—I follow their example in my humble way."

"It does you credit."

"I think it does—this hut and the barren field is the last remnant of our estates; I

would not disgrace the noble blood that runs in my veins by turning tradesman or mechanic, so I have become—what I am.”

There was much of pride in the tone and aspect of the last of the Valences, as he uttered these spirited sentiments.

“And now,” said the stranger, “suppose we arrange at once—”

“Ah! true—but I am very hungry, what say you to some supper, we can talk as we eat.”

“With pleasure,” replied the stranger, but had we not better—”

“I understand you, speak without witnesses?—no, it is not necessary, I have no secrets from Jack or Julia.”

“Very well—excuse my caution—I am a lawyer—”

“Then I must be on my guard that you do not pick my pocket,” said Valence, with another laugh, which was re-echoed by his companions. “By-the-bye, Julia, I should

tell you how I came to make this gentleman's acquaintance. About an hour ago I met him walking alone, and very slowly and dejectedly; from which I erroneously concluded that the poor man was weighed down by the weight of his pockets, I, accordingly, prescribed a lead pill as a permanent cure for the disease. The mere idea acted as a pecuniary emetic, and I was, I assure you, extremely shocked to see so respectable a looking person make so disgraceful an exhibition. Fifteen shillings and some coppers—no more on my honor! However the gentleman offers business—I don't much like it, but it seems there is a good haul to be made, so I suppose it must be done."

"You will not repent it," said the stranger.

"What time did you say he passed?"

"Probably about half past ten—he goes to take money to a girl he seduced, and has a magnificent gold snuff-box, set with diamonds,

a gift from the Emperor of Russia, I have heard."

"And pray what is his name?"

"His name?"

"Yes, his name, I must know that for fear of any mistake."

"You cannot mistake him after the description I have given you."

"I don't know that; the night may be dark——"

"But it is moonlight."

"No matter, there are clouds—in short, I will not move a step in the matter unless I know his name," said the robber, resolutely.

"Well then," said the stranger with hesitation, "his name is—Count Mesmer de Biron."

"Count de Biron!—what?—the man who killed Lord Granville the other day at his masquerade—by accident?"

"I don't know whether he killed him by accident or no," replied the stranger savagely,

"but he is the man of all others I hold in the deepest hatred!"

"Then why don't you settle him yourself?" said the robber with undisguised contempt.

"Because he could recognize me in case he happened to escape, and because——"

"You are a lawyer, and would rather risk the neck of another than yourself," completed the highwayman in a brutal tone.

"Perhaps so," said the other with well affected coolness, "however, in one way or the other, it shall be done, this very night, if he comes; so choose, quickly, whether you undertake it or not?"

"I do!" said the robber, "he shall be hermetically sealed in one of those stone coffins before morning—and how much do you say you will give?"

"A hundred guineas if you succeed!"

"And how am I to know that you will keep your word?"

"Believe me," said Monville, "for it was he

I shall be but too eager to ascertain the result of your enterprise, to drink the cup of vengeance I have so long revelled in contemplating. This man is my most deadly foe, to him I owe the loss of ——, but no matter. I hate him with such hatred that I would spend my last shilling, traverse a hemisphere to look upon his corpse and to feel certain that he no longer breathed, no longer lived to grind, to threaten, to torment me, to compel me to be his slave, and yet to grovel in the dust before him. No! you need not fear—I shall come, the money, and more, shall be yours, if once this detested fiend lies cold and stark before me!"

These words the lawyer uttered, with the frightful energy of desperation, in tones that carried conviction to the hearts of his auditors.

"And your name—your own name?" said the robber.

"*My name?*"

"No—stay—your *card*?"

The ingenuity of the robber struck Monville

forcibly in these last words, for a moment he hesitated, then thrusting his hand into his waistcoat pocket, he produced the card of one of his clients, and handed it to the highwayman.

"Mr. Wilson—very well," said the robber.

"And now good evening," said Monville, "I must be going—you will not forget to strike home!" added he in a lower tone, "mind, he must *die*—no mercy!"

"No, no, replied the robber fiercely."

"One word more, this Count de Biron is a perfect devil—he will show fight."

"All the better, I dislike stabbing in cold blood."

"But he will be unarmed, so there will be no great difficulty."

"Fear not—he shall have three inches of *this* in his breast!" and the robber displayed a long narrow knife of most formidable aspect.

"It is well!" said the lawyer, and he ascen-

ded a ladder which Jack placed for him to the trap door.

"You will accompany me Jack," said the robber, and keep watch at some distance for the (peelera.*) I shall take my stand opposite the hill in the shade of the trees, by the park palings—Julia, "if I do not return within two days, conclude that I am either a prisoner in jail, or obliged to make myself scarce in this part of the land. I shall write to you to tell you what to do—give me my bakers, will you, and kiss me, my girl; now for this young fashionable! By the way, Jack, that fellow Wilson seemed to think there was something more than accident in the death of the Lord, what's-his name? the other evening—if so we are instruments of Justice for once in a way.

said Jack, sullenly, "perhaps the carries a sword-stick?"

3, they are quite out of fashion!"

* Vulgo policemen.

“ Well come along—what shall be the signal ?”

“ Whistle ‘ Nix my dolly,’ if you see the Count or any body like him, and ‘ down amongst the dead men,’ if you see a blue coat.”

“ And what am I to get for my trouble ?”

“ A fourth of the profits you avaricious coward.”

“ I don’t think that is——”

“ If you grumble you shall have nothing,” said the robber, sharply, giving his accomplice a contemptuous glance, and a fierce kick upon his meagre shine, “ and now let us saddle the horses and be off !”

CHAPTER II.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY.

ON the north side of Regent's Park, and immediately opposite Primrose Hill, that far famed resort of cockney pedestrians in their Sunday excursions, by which the summit of the mount, formerly a peak, has now been worn down to a flat surface of considerable area, there is a tract of road about a mile in extent, utterly destitute of lamps or policemen, which at night time presents an aspect at once

dismal and uninviting. On one side the dark and dense plantations, surrounding and overshadowing the palings of the park; on the other, the hill and the adjoining fields. A faint row of lights in the distance intimate the existence of the Hampstead Road, and serve by contrast to render yet more gloomy the darkness enveloping the locality we speak of. It is a place where, if chance should ever take you alone on foot and in the night time, you involuntarily think of ghosts or footpads, quicken your pace, grasp more firmly your stick or umbrella, and strain your eyes in search of the distant lamps, which, even to the most timid, afford a consciousness of tranquil security. But, if you are not timid, neither care for footpads nor spectres, (there are a few old blasted trees by the way-side, nearest the hill, eminently ghost-like in appearance) and are not in a particular hurry to reach home by some particular hour—your systematic bed time, you should ascend the

hill of Primrose, and having reached the apex, gaze round you on the vast metropolis of the world with its long lines of brilliant lamps—a sea of lights, with here and there a brighter dash of of effulgence, it is worth looking at we assure you, and if you have a camp-stool with you and a cigar case, a fine place where

“The mind smokes calmly
Like Vesuvius—”

as a poetical friend of ours grotesquely expresses himself in one of his odes,* whose originality of idea is unequalled in this age of commonplaces. Perhaps we may treat the reader to another extract or two before we

* The ‘Student’s Note Book,’ it has only been published for private circulation. How much the public have lost thereby can be known only to those who have seen and appreciated it. But Mr. B. B— is a man of fortune, and perhaps thinks more of his hunters than his muses.

have done, despite the treason of such a proceeding.

Along the road we have described, rode a solitary horseman of erect and stately form upon a tall black steed,, who, by his proud step and frequent haughty tossings of his head, seemed to share his master's exaltation. As the horseman passed him, a man of ungainly aspect, seated upon the railings by the way-side commenced loudly whistling a popular air.

"And so to-morrow," thought Mesmer, neither heeding nor indeed perceiving the aforesaid whistler, "to-morrow I shall be Lord Wilsdown!—a peer of England's realm! —I, the bastard—the shop-boy—the—ha, ha! —it would be curious to see the expression of my dear friends, now so eager to court my favor, so delighted to receive me at their houses—the proudest of our aristocracy, if some voice from the abyss should suddenly reveal the truth, should suddenly say—'this

is he who was once called Alfred Milford, the son of an old miser of a shopkeeper'—or some miraculous event should disclose the tissue of what the vulgar term unscrupulous crimes of the most heinous description, by which I have arrived at this elevated position. I cannot help despising a world so easily duped, and who knows but that some day I may tire of the farce, rise after dinner, and give some twenty or thirty of my distinguished guests a brief sketch of the Right Honourable Count Mesmer de Biron, Baron of Wilsdown's, &c., &c., (by that time I shall be a knight of two or three orders, perhaps a viscount or an earl) private history. I can imagine their looks of horror and surprise. It would take some time to convince them that I was not joking or a lunatic—ha, ha, ha !”

And the impostor laughed heartily at these facetious fancies of his own creation.

There was something of an unearthly scorn.

a 'godless glee' in the adventurer's laugh which tingled strangely in the ears of the expectant robber, who, at this moment, spurred his horse forward and caught that of Biron with one hand, whilst in the other he flourished significantly his long and glittering dagger.

"What do you mean, ruffian?" said Mesmer, angrily, aiming a blow at the head of the highwayman with his riding whip, and thus luckily intercepting the arm of Valence, as it descended with the dangerous knife and slightly wounded our hero. "What! do you want—my money?—you shall have it, because I am unarmed, and you have a knife and pistols as I see, otherwise you should——"

"Well, give up the blunt!" said the robber still more bluntly, "and keep your boasting for a better opportunity."

After the first shock they had recoiled to some distance from one another, and Biron had reversed his whip in order to derive the

benefit from the heavy handle, which afforded no contemptible weapon.

Meanwhile the robber had drawn a pistol from his pocket, and presented it at the head of our hero, who at once gave up all idea of flight, which, the superiority of his beast would have otherwise rendered of extreme facility, and resolved to meet the robber upon his own grounds.

“ I will give up every thing I have about me, my purse, my gold snuff-box, even my breast-pin, and the ring upon my finger, if you will let me depart unhurt,” said Mesmer, with as much cowardice in his tone as the natural combativeness of his disposition would admit of.

“ Hem !” thought the robber, “ this is not much like the devil that Wilson talked of—well,” said he aloud, “ shell out ! and be quick about it, my fine count, and just drop that d——d whip of yours, or I shall send a little lead through your carcase, Mr. Biron !”

"You know me then?" said Biron, dropping his riding whip as the robber requested, and feeling in his pocket for his snuff-box.

"Yes," said the highwayman, gruffly, "I know you, though I never had the pleasure of being introduced to you."

"Here is the snuff-box," said Biron, "but first lower that pistol, it has doubtless hair triggers?"

"I should *think* so," said the ruffian.

"An accident might happen—"

"Don't be such an infernal shivering coward!" growled the robber, scornfully.

The eyes of Mesmer flashed fire at these words, but he advanced timidly towards the highwayman, and extended his arm to its utmost length, offered his snuff-box to the robber.

"Take it," said he, "it is more valuable than it looks, it was a gift to my grandfather from the Czar of all the Russias, I will redeem it for any sum you may propose."

“ We will arrange all that presently—give me the box, and fork out your purse at once—if it pleases you, *my lord*,” added Valence, sarcastically.

Strange as it may seem, this ‘*my lord*,’ sounded most pleasantly to the ears of the embryo Baron of Wilsdown, and he frankly extended the valuable snuff-box, the gift of the illustrious Czar of all the Russias, to the robber, who eagerly attempted to grasp it; but at the moment he did so, Biron, with great adroitness, dashed its contents in the face of his enemy, and, at the same time, contrived to give his horse a kick, which caused it to set off at a brisk trot in the direction of the York and Albany Inn, which stands near the north-west corner of the Park.

The robber, blinded by the snuff and suffering excruciating pain, almost lost his seat, and dropping his pistol in his confusion, was carried unwillingly onwards, he knew not whither.

But Mesmer, having caught up his whip, pursued the bandit with such speed, that he was enabled to lay over his back and shoulders a shower of blows, which the other could neither return nor parry; nor could he stop his horse, for Biron let every third blow fall upon the animal's crupper, until it finally burst into a gallop, and dashed away at a most furious pace. The horse of our adventurer however being of infinitely higher mettle, kept bravely by its side, and the robber absolutely yelled beneath the blows of the count's ponderous riding whip. He no longer doubted Biron's title to the epithet of 'devil' bestowed upon him by the lawyer. His rage knew no limits, and he determined at every hazard, even yet to execute his murderous project.

By degrees the robber's power of sight in some measure returned, although the smarting of his eyes was still indescribably painful. He suddenly turned round on his saddle, and

grasped Mesmer by the collar, at the same moment his horse scoured from under him, for he had already lost his stirrups, and left him hanging upon the collar of the count. To the latter this attack was quite unexpected ; however, he struck the hand of the robber with the handle of his whip till they were covered with blood. In vain he strove to shake off his foe, for some distance the bandit was dragged along the ground, but his grasp did not relax, and Mesmer, having irrecoverably lost his equilibrium, was torn from his horse, and came, still grasped by the robber, with great violence to the ground. Luckily, he also managed to get clear of his stirrups.

A deadly struggle now commenced ; with his left hand Biron had seized the wrist of the robber pertaining to the hand in which he still held his formidable knife ; with the right Mesmer hammered the countenance of his antagonist, who strove to shift his grasp from

the collar to the throat of our hero, whilst he struggled to obtain free play for his dagger, which would at once have decided the contest.

"Wretch!" said Biron, "drop your dagger and I will let you go harmless; remember we are close to the houses, and my shouts for help will be heard.

"It is too late!" growled the bandit, and his hand was upon the neckcloth of his opponent.

By a desperate blow Mesmer, dislodged two of the teeth of the robber, from whose mouth a sanguinary foam now issued.

The robber was a man of prodigious muscular power; he had been a prize-fighter; his arms and legs were nearly twice the thickness of Mesmer's; it was like a contest between an Apollo and a Hercules.

Biron felt how small was his chance of success against such an antagonist, and a bitter pang of despairing rage thrilled in the heart

of the daring impostor at the thought that his unparalleled career was about to be closed by the superiority of mere brute force, by the bestial vengeance of a wretch he had already outwitted and horsewhipped !

The robber had now wound his hand into the cravat of our adventurer, who had several times shouted in vain for assistance.

Biron felt that all was lost ; his strength was rapidly failing ; he could scarcely keep off the hand in which the robber held his knife ; a ferocious gleam of triumph shot from the eyes of his enemy.

“ My life !—I will enrich you for—” Meemer ejaculated incoherently ; he could say no more.

The robber's only reply was to twist his hand still tighter in the neckcloth of the Count. He had never wavered in his intention of murdering Biron, for strange as it may seem, this miserable descendant of the noble house of Valence was not a man to break his

plighted word, and he had promised Monville that it should be done. Besides it was evident that the latter had completely set his mind upon the death of the Count de Biron, and might, were a mere robbery committed, have even lodged an information, in his indignation at so paltry an advantage being taken of him.

Biron was beginning to get black in the face, his strength and breath were alike rapidly diminishing ; an idea struck him ; he determined to make one last effort.

The road, on the side next to the fields, was bounded by a slight railing and a ditch of considerable depth ; towards this Mesmer manoeuvred, and suddenly striking, with all his remaining strength, the elbow of the robber with the handle of his whip, which he had all along retained, he was lucky enough to produce as he intended, that extraordinary effect, in vulgar parlance termed " hitting the funny bone," which everybody must have frequently

experienced. As by an electric shock, the robber felt his arm for a moment paralysed; Biron threw off his hand from his throat, inhaled a full breath of air just in time to avert asphyxia, and at the same time relaxed his hold upon the wrist of his ferocious enemy, who instantly raised his knife to strike a deadly blow, but before it could descend, Mesmer gave the robber so violent a push, that, standing as he did, with a gap in the railings immediately behind him, he slipped, lost his footing, and fell backwards into the ditch.

At the sound of the splash caused by the robber's fall into the mud, our adventurer felt his strength and courage revive, and shouted loudly for assistance. He did not attempt to run, for he felt that his strength was not equal to it, that the bandit would have instantly overtaken him, and by a stab from his long knife, dispatched him without further trouble ; but he took his stand at the gap in

the railings, and as often as the robber attempted to scramble up from the ditch, he thrust him back with kicks and blows from his whip, still continuing to shout for assistance. At length he heard footsteps—they were coming to his aid—but his head was dizzy, his brain began to reel—a mist of many colours seemed to hang confusedly before his eyes—the robber had regained the road—Biron aimed one desperate blow at the head of his foe—and he fell senseless to the ground.

When the three policemen he had heard came up, they found the Count and his would-be murderer extended side by side, the face of the latter covered with blood.

Late that night Mesmer reached home in a cab; the next day he was in a high fever and delirious.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE INTERIM.

ALTHOUGH Lord Friskerton *was*, Mesmer de Biron *was not* ignorant of the fact that the deceased, Lord Granville, had been on the most intimate terms with the Villersdens in Italy, and that, in fact, Granville was either engaged, or on the verge of becoming so, to the lovely Dowager.

The Count had conceived for the Duchess a passion of the most violent description ; but

between his desires and their consummation stood two most formidable objects, Lord Granville and his own wife. To rid himself both of the Peer and the Countess he at once determined, and began to revolve in the dark abyss of his spirit the means by which both objects might be effected, when, as we have seen, an accident of the most tragical nature freed him from the dangerous rivalry of the unfortunate Granville.

Everybody pitied Biron as the unconscious author of so terrible a catastrophe, and the Count went into deep mourning, appearing for some time to everybody he encountered, sunk into a profound melancholy, which his friends, especially Lord Friskerton and Prince Aurelius de Rosenberg, endeavoured constantly to enliven. Some time passed away, and he had gradually resumed his cheerfulness, appeared again in society, and in the House of Commons. His personality was, if anything, rendered more interesting by his homicide, he

was more talked about than ever, and became, indeed, one of those "not to know whom argues yourself unknown." To be sure, now and then people asked the question, like Ezzelin of Lara, "whence came he?—what doth he here?" but the story of the miserly old Count his father, his morose and solitary life, and strange habits, was by this time so well known, that these enquiries were of little import. Besides it was quite impossible to think anything very bad of a young and handsome noble, owner of Wilsdown Castle, and apparently possessing an income of princely magnificence.

There was another mysterious story, too, got whispered about, though vague in its particulars, and generally accompanied by significant nods and shrugs of the shoulders in the narration, and this curiously enough, was not far distant from the truth, viz., that Biron was, in fact, a natural son of the great Lord Byron, and this daring assertion was generally

backed by allusions to a family likeness, his talent for improvising the *lines to my son*, written by the deceased poet, which have hitherto never been accounted for, and the economy of Lord B. in Italy, when he was evidently saving a fortune for his beloved, though illegitimate offspring, which had, doubtless, accumulated immensely during the young Count's minority.

These tales did no harm to our adventurer's popularity. Young, rich, prepossessing, he could not fail in his progress towards the very throne of fashion, and soon "The Biron" was the vehicle *a la mode*, and the Bironic tailor the only tailor in the world. His taste in pictures, in furniture, in cookery, was quoted at the clubs, and in the boudoir and at the moment that he sold—not his principles, he had none—but his political power, for a peerage, *Lord Wilsdown* had reached the culminating point of his celebrity.

But Mesmer's thirst for excitement was

insatiable ; no sooner had he succeeded in grasping one object of his ambition than he proposed to himself some new goal, and dashed away in the renewed pursuit. Truly there is more pleasure in the chase than in the possession.

Augusta had become indifferent to him, although they had not yet been married a year ; but it was of course impossible that there could be any real confidence between them ; the pure mind of Augusta would have revolted from the infamous devices to which Mesmer resorted, and where there is no confidence, there is little sympathy, and where there is little sympathy, there is little love.

It is possible that had Mesmer encountered a woman equally as intellectual, fiery, and ambitious as himself, with an equally lax view of social morality, a veritable and lasting love might have existed between them from the sympathy of their respective natures, for there is sympathy even in evil. This, however, is

mere hypothesis ; as it was, the intelligent, beautiful, and affectionate Augusta became insipid to his novelty loving imagination. Like the other victims of his selfish passion, (and Clara was but one of many) some little inferior to the Countess in beauty, and innocence, she was now destined to be thrown aside for another, and on the vision of the Duchess of Villersden ran all his thoughts ; that she should be his he determined, and regarded his wife as an annoying bar to the accomplishment of his projects. He behaved towards her with a cool politeness which rendered her completely miserable, and vented his spleen in sneers at her relations, whom he treated so coldly, that they became rare guests at his house. To Colonel Rossmill in particular, he made made himself obnoxious, by his unceasing jests, and witticisms, on the science of phrenology, to which that gentleman was devoted, and he offended Merlmore, by his decisive refusal to perceive the necessity of lending him some money in a great emergency.

It may be as well here to state retrospectively that Adolphus Cashall expired some hours previous to the arrival of Mr. Merlmore at his house at Blackheath, and "made no sign," he died very suddenly, after receiving a letter from one Thomas Smith. With him perished one of Mesmer's most dangerous enemies, and some secrets which, had they come to the knowledge of Merlmore, might have led to investigations by no means agreeable to the former.

Having made these necessary explanations, we must now hasten to resume the thread of our history, for events are now crowding thick upon the Impostor, dark clouds hang threateningly over his destiny, a storm is brooding—the worm trodden on, will turn at length—and the bold, the wily Mesmer lies raving on a fevered couch, unconscious of the storm about to burst.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PHYSICIAN.

“THE Doctor is here, my dear Mesmer,” said Augusta in a gentle voice approaching the bed side of her husband.

“Let him come in,” said Biron calmly.

Sir Henry —— entered the room.

“Permit me to feel your pulse,” said the physician.

“It is not necessary.”

“Not necessary—how ? you are joking ?”

“I am perfectly serious, Sir Henry ; you were sent for without my permission.”

“But my lord—By the way allow me to congratulate you on your elevation ; I saw it announced in the *Times* this morning—it is

not customary to ask the permission of people in your state as to whether they will be cured or not."

"In my state—what state do you mean?" said the Count raising himself on his elbow.

"Why you have had fever and delirium; are you not aware of it?"

"Possibly; but I am not delirious now."

"But you are very feverish; however, I will prescribe something for you, and in two or three days--"

"I shall get up to-morrow," said the patient obstinately, sinking back upon the pillow.

"Indeed, my lord, I hope you will be guilty of no such imprudence."

"Excuse me, Sir Henry, but I forget at the moment—are you an olopathist or a Homœopathist?"

"My lord, I—"

"Because," continued Mesmer gravely, "to whichever of these systems you may belong, I must decidedly beg leave to disagree with you in toto."

"The head affected," muttered the doctor, "some lesion of the brain, perhaps, occasioned by the blows of the ruffian who attempted to rob him—pity the rascal contrived to escape from the police!"

"The cold water or hydropathic cure will be my policy," said Biron, "so you see, as we do not take similar scientific views of the case, it is useless to prescribe anything for me."

"Really my lord, I hope you will not trifle with your health by trying any absurd experiment."

"Of course, doctor," said Lord Wilsdown innocently, "you have visited several of the most noted hydropathic institutions, observed the progress of cases under the treatment, and seen the best works upon the subject?"*

* I think it necessary here to state that this chapter was written long previous to the publication of Sir E. B. Lytton's letter on Hydropathy in the New Monthly Magazine.

“ Indeed,” replied Sir Henry, “ I have been much more usefully occupied than to waste my time upon such ridiculous quackery.”

“ Oh !” said Biron, “ that is a pity ; it is very effectual in many cases, indeed there are very few diseases incurable either by cold water or animal magnetism, so simple are the remedies of nature--do you often apply magnetism, Sir Henry ?”

“ Apply magnetism ! I should consider myself a disgrace to my profession.”

“ What do you think of it then ?”

“ That it is a tissue of unmitigated humbug.”*

“ You consider the records of the innumerable cures in Germany, France, and even England and America as purely fabulous ?”

“ Why not exactly,” said the physician a little confused, for he began to perceive that

* A favourite epithet of the faculty for remedies they know nothing about, and are too lazy and empirical to investigate.

he was exposing his ignorance, "I fancy imagination has a great deal to do with it."

"Do you ever cure by imagination?"

"Sometimes," said the physician, "it is a useful auxiliary; but I must be going." Sir Henry looked at his watch. "I have many calls to make, so pray let me feel your pulse, and prescribe for you at once; you will over-exert yourself by talking, and bring on a return of delirium."

"No, no;" said Biron, "to *return* to what I was saying, you allow that imagination often effects cures?"

"Yes, I must say I have known some very odd instances of its effects."

"Then why not always apply this tremendous power in your practice? I will tell you why; it is because the faculty are ever opposed to new discoveries, however wonderful, because they are, in nine cases out of ten, blind students of secondary causes, to whom the workings of the spirit and its mighty effects

upon the corporeal frame are as a sealed book. You feel the pulse, you regard the tongue; but you never think of enquiring the state of the patient's mind, in which, perhaps, the origin and sustaining cause of his illness is to be found. How can I, Sir Henry, after your confessions of ignorance and indifference on two such important points as those I have mentioned, possibly feel any confidence in your skill?"

"Then, my lord, I wish you a very good morning," and the offended physician took his departure.

It is almost incredible how bigotted and dogmatical are the general run of the medical world in this country, how obstinately they refuse to investigate facts, with what careless indifference, and even falsehood, they speak of every new doctrine that is broached, and how candidly, almost boastingly, they confess their ignorance. Equally incredible are their attempts at material explanations of vital phenomena, in which the *power*, the *principle*, the

motive energy is almost invariably passed over, and that most important question quietly shirked, if not altogether overlooked.

Biron rang the bell for his valet.

“ Sago, let me have an unlimited supply of spring water and blankets.”

“ Yes, sir—my lord, I mean.”

“ And let no doctors come to worry me ; I am afraid,” muttered he, “ that fever makes one speak the truth too carelessly—I wish I had not said anything about magnetism !”

In ten minutes our hero had drunk ten glasses of water, and was perspiring beneath a mountain of blankets. The next morning he awoke, after a refreshing sleep, perfectly free from fever, somewhat weak and languid, but in other respects quite well. Towards afternoon he arose, and having performed his toilet and breakfasted in his dressing room, descended the stairs with the intention of writing some letters in his library.

CHAPTER V.

REVELATIONS.

As Mesmer passed the door of the drawing-room, he fancied that he could hear voices in earnest conference, and his curiosity being excited, he stepped noiselessly into the adjoining room — he was habited in his slippers and *robe de chambre*—one of the folding doors was ajar, so that he could hear distinctly every word uttered.

“ Oh ! this is terrible, this is shameful !” exclaimed Augusta.

“ My dear lady, I entreat you not to hint—even by the slightest allusion—to *him*, that you have seen me, remember that you have promised—~~sworn~~ to keep faithfully this dreadful secret.”

“ But to think that I am wedded to an impostor — a swindler! —and you say he deserted you?”

“ For months together I never saw him, until one day we met by accident; he pretended not to know me, I followed him to a small shop in the city, his name was then Alfred Milford, he dealt in old books and prints. From that time I frequently came to see him, and he was more kind to me, even gave me several sums of money, though whence he obtained them I cannot conceive, for his poverty appeared great. Oh, lady! it is a fearful thing to be reduced by the indulgence of ill-regulated passion to become the

pensioner of one for whom everything has been sacrificed—and my family was respectable and honourable --- to see the growing indifference of the being we idolize — and then his father died, and he went no one knew whither---there was a lawyer made some fuss afterwards, I heard, about a will he had drawn up, leaving the old man's property to some society, but the son was gone, and with him the money, and nobody took up the matter, so it dropped and was forgotten. When I next met Alfred I was in great distress, I had a child starving at home, it was a cold, stormy night, I met him in the street, he was dressed like a man of fashion and affected astonishment at my recognition, he was so much altered that I almost doubted the evidence of my senses, he gave me some money, and we parted. But first I should say he told me that his name was Count Mesmer de Biron——”

“Cursedly incautious of me!” muttered

Biron. "However, she will find herself baffled yet, the malicious hussy!"

"I was so astounded, that for the moment I really believed myself deceived as to his identity. But the eyes of love are keen; the more I reflected upon our meeting, the more I felt convinced that Alfred Milford and the Count de Biron were one and the same person. Some time afterwards I heard he had taken a house; I called upon him, and endeavoured to touch his heart by my supplications. Again he pretended not to know me, but at length assumed an appearance of renewed and repentant tenderness, which my too credulous heart eagerly received as genuine; he then took apartments for me and came occasionally to see me, or rather the child, for on the latter was centred all his attention. He had promised to come some days since, and that was the reason of my calling here to-day. I was ignorant of his being married, and little thought that the last hope I ventured to en-

tain, in connection with this earth, was thus to be crushed and destroyed."

"And this hope?"

"Was that, for the sake of the child, the father would forgive the sin of the mother of which he himself was the cause—and how artfully my innocence was tempted it is not for you to imagine! In short, I cherished the delusive hope that he would yet, by marrying me, restore me to my own esteem, and, in some measure, to the position from which I was degraded—this hope is now for ever blasted. May you never know what it is to be neglected and coldly cast aside—but no, you are so fair, so gentle—even he must hesitate before he inflicts pain upon one so lovely!"

"Alas!" said Augusta, "men are so selfish, there are no limits to their cruelty, believe me I sincerely pity you—and I, I too am to be pitied!"

"Yes, madam, to be pitied for listening to such a tirade of nonsense, with such absurd

credulity," said Mesmer, sternly, as he emerged from the ante-room, "accidentally I have overheard your conversation, as also the affectionate, wife-like terms which you have thought proper to apply to me. Perhaps I ought to treat this with the contempt it deserves; but I am a philosopher, therefore I shall explain the facts which appear, it is true, a little mysterious, for your edification, and the best thing you can do," added he, with bitter sarcasm, "is to display still further your devoted affection for your husband, by retailing these family secrets to all your acquaintances, and doing the utmost in your power to disgrace an honourable and ancient name, which you yourself so unworthily share."

The countenance of Lord Wilsdown was ghastly pale, as he addressed these words to Augusta. To Clara, for she it was with whom the countess had been in conference, he said nothing; but the look of cold, unpitying hate he bent upon her, spoke more than volumes

of the most elaborated execrations. His poor victim, who looked worn and sickly from grief, care, and physical illness, trembled in every joint, whilst Augusta blushed deeply, and, mingled with fear, felt all the shame of a criminal detected in the commission of some outrageous and unpardonable crime, whilst the real criminal stood proud and erect, as a judge before the beings of whose misery he was the author.

“ Firstly, as to my relation with this young person,” said Biron, slowly and distinctly “ it is quite true that, led away by passion and feelings, which we were unable to control, we were mutually guilty of an indiscretion, which led to the result of her exclusion from her father’s house, and the birth of a child. Deeply regretting this youthful error, I endeavoured, the moment it lay in my power, to make every possible reparation—”

“ Except,” said Clara, indignantly, “ the only reparation worthy of a man of honor.”

“ And that,” said Mesmer.

“ Redeeming the promise of marriage, without which you would never have succeeded in seducing me from my father’s home !”

“ Promise of marriage !” exclaimed Biron, “ good heavens, you rave — you forget the immense difference in our rank — the daughter of a petty tradesman, and the Count de Biron ; it is absurd !”

“ You were plain Alfred Milford, and no Count de Biron then ; nor do I believe that you are rightfully so named at this present moment.”

“ No,” said Biron coolly, “ my proper title at present is Lord Wilsdown.”

“ Lord Wilsdown ! merciful heavens ! Alfred Milford, Lord Wilsdown !”

“ Yes ; I have been raised to the peerage, and rightly, too, considering my family, fortune, and position. Now, listen to me Lady Wilsdown, on the strength of information given you by a person whom you had never

before seen, and whose character, even by her own acknowledgment, is by no means free from blemish."

"And is it for you to reproach me with the frailty to which your own?"

"Mesmer, you are unjust as well as unfeeling!" said Augusta boldly.

"Hear me, and in silence," retorted Biron with a withering glance at the Countess; I was merely stating simple facts; no matter, I say on the strength of a stranger's assertions, every word of which might have been false for aught that you could know to the contrary, you at once branded the husband you have sworn to obey and cherish, as a swindler and an impostor! Epithets which should never be used but when supported by the most incontrovertible proofs and the most unimpeachable testimony. Now let me ask you whether I have not always told you that my father lived in the greatest seclusion, that he was a miser, and a man of most eccentric character? Say

did I or did I not tell you so—not once—but dozens of times ?”

“ You did,” said Augusta.

“ And that he lived under an assumed name ?”

“ I do not think — that is, I do not remember.”

“ No ? You do not remember ? But I *did* tell you so ; and I now tell you that that assumed name was Milford. Yes, learn now the fact, which my pride hitherto caused me to conceal—the fact, that in order to gratify the mean and grovelling passion of insatiable avarice with which he was afflicted, my wretched father sought, under a feigned name, in a miserable shop, to increase, by hoarding up its paltry profits, his already splendid fortune---that fortune which I have inherited and which alone is tolerably conclusive evidence that my father was not what he appeared to be to the world. But, Lady Wilsdown, I have papers---papers which have even recently been submitted to the inspection of the Russian Ambassador, you are at liberty to inspect them ;

“speak ! do you wish to do so ? Do you doubt my word ?”

“ No, no,” said Augusta trembling.

Then you are convinced that I am not an impostor, *not* a swindler ?” said Mesmer grandly; and it was impossible to behold his dilating form and indignant features, and not acknowledge the nobility stamped upon every attitude and gesture he assumed.

“ Quite, quite,” said Augusta supporting herself by the back of a chair.

“ You may go, then !” continued the Count turning to Clara, upon whom he bent a look that fiends might have envied ; “ go, and may God forgive you as I do, for the injury you have attempted to do me. We meet no more ; for you and your child I shall provide, little as you deserve my generosity—no words—be-gone !”

There was nothing threatening in the *tone* in which Mesmer uttered these words, and as his back was turned to her, Augusta could

not, of course, see the look by which they were accompanied.

Clara strove to speak ; her bosom heaved convulsively ; something seemed to rise and choke her ; in vain she endeavoured to give utterance to the feelings that shook her delicate frame by their violence — *that look*, by magnetic influence, paralysed her tongue ; she uttered a faint groan, and rushed from the room.

Biron waited until he heard the street door close, and then abruptly quitted the room, exclaiming—“ I shall come back directly”—in about five minutes he returned to Augusta, and said in a voice more in sorrow than in anger, to her ineffable relief, for she was trembling with fear of a violent scene, or what she still more dreaded, one of Mesmer’s quiet rages,* which by this time she understood to be far

* An hereditary malady on the paternal side.

more terrible than the most angry demonstration---

“ My dear Augusta, you were wrong to listen so readily to the assertions of this girl, with whom, some years ago, I formed, as I have said, a connexion long since broken off in every respect, but that which regards the maintenance of herself and child. She has behaved very badly, and abused both my confidence and my generosity. At the time we became acquainted I was glad to seek any refuge from the horrors of my position, and the vulgar associations by which I was surrounded; besides you must be aware that I merely did what every man does before he is married. But I had never really, truly loved until I met you, to you my heart alone belongs; and if of late there has been any slight estrangement, owing to my too great devotion to the arduous duties of political life, I sincerely regret that it should have been the case; but I am taxing

myself beyond my strength, this excitement will bring on a return of the fever. Augusta, come kiss me ; let us forgive one another : I your jealousy and unjust suspicions---you, my past indiscretion and---”

Mesmer sank languidly upon a sofa, and pressed his hand to his breast as if suffering intense pain.

“ My dear Mesmer !” exclaimed Augusta flying to his side and throwing her arms round his neck, “ let us think no more of this wicked woman.

“ She is, I assure you, a most artful creature, and I was so young and inexperienced !”

“ I dare say, after all you were not so much to blame.”

“ Indeed I believe I was rather the seduced than the seducer.”

“ No doubt ! I wonder how I could credit all the nonsense she told me ! but you are in pain my love ?”

“ Yes—I fear the blows of that highwayman

have had a more serious effect upon my chest than I at first suspected—since I did not lose my snuff box.”

“Good heavens! let me send for medical advice instantly!”

“No, I have no faith in doctors; you saw how I got rid of Sir Henry; if I feel worse I will send for Prince Aurelius to mesmerise me.”

“Do let me send for him at once!”

“You seem very eager to send for Prince Aurelius.”

“No indeed, it was entirely on your account.”

“I think the Prince is rather particular in his attentions to you.”

“But consider he has known me ever since I was twelve years old.”

“If I remember, you spoke very enthusiastically of him before we were married?”

“So I do now, I admire his talents, his generous principles, the grace of his manners, and the charms of his conversation—surely

there is no harm in that, nor does it prevent me from loving you with my whole soul. But oh Mesmer! if you knew what pain your coldness has given me lately, how often I have sought my solitary chamber to weep bitter tears for the loss of your affection."

"My dear Augusta," said Mesmer, visibly affected, "pardon me, I was fool enough to be jealous of your friendship for Rosenberg—say you forgive me, dearest!"

"Then you love me still?" exclaimed Augusta, with unrestrained delight.

"Never, even for a moment have I ceased to love you my angel dear!" replied Biron, pressing her soft cheek to his own."

"Oh how happy that word makes me!"

"And me!" said Biron, at the moment with a feeling bordering upon sincerity. It was impossible not to be touched by such loveliness, and devotion as Augusta's. "But it will not do to lose sight of my object,"

thought he, suddenly checking the softer sensations to which he was yielding.

“Augusta,” continued Biron aloud, “I am compelled to revert once more to a disagreeable theme. Are you perfectly convinced of the truth of my explanation as to what that woman said, or do you wish to see the papers? If you feel the slightest doubt upon the subject, let me bring the proofs from my *escrutoire*, and at once decide the question?”

“My dear Mesmer, your word is sufficient, and it is cruel of you to refuse me forgiveness for the hasty words, which, taken as I was by surprise, and considering the circumstances.—”

“Enough,” said Lord Wilsdown, “we will say no more about it, but you will comprehend that it would be extremely unpleasant to me if these stories got noised about and talked of, you must therefore swear during my lifetime never to mention them to a single person.”

“I promise never to do so!”

“Swear!”

“Well I swear—you remind me of Hamlet as you look now,” added Augusta, playfully, the elasticity of her spirits beginning to return, and gazing on the handsome and delicately chiselled features of Mesmer, rendered still more interesting by his illness.

“But Mesmer!” she exclaimed, starting back at the frightful change in the expression of his countenance, which suddenly developed itself; “what is the matter, are you ill?”

“Yes, yes,” said Biron, hastily striving to recover his countenance, “my nerves are disordered by this *fracas*, I shall be better presently.” This was in fact the case, as otherwise the command which our adventurer possessed over his features was consummate. But some one had compared Biron with Hamlet, shortly after the death of Lord Granville, and for some reason or other Augusta’s innocent allusion to that Shakesperian hero, by reminding him of the malicious

remark, caused in him the most vivid emotion. However in a few minutes he recovered his composure, and resumed the subject of the oath.

“Swear most solemnly,” said Mesmer “that whatever may occur, whatever may happen even to our total separation or divorce—”

“Mesmer, do not speak so, you shock me.”

“I merely put the most extreme case—swear that in any event you will never reveal the facts with which you have to-day become acquainted.”

“I swear most solemnly to preserve eternal secrecy !”

“Enough,” said Biron, embracing Augusta, “we will never again speak of these matters, but hark ! there is a knock, are you at home?”

“Yes, I said so—it is too late to countermand the order.”

“No matter love—I wonder who it is.”

“Prince Aurelius de Rosenberg,” said the footman.

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGHTS.

“I HOPE you are better Count?—my lord I should say, for I saw the history of your robbery and peerage in the same newspaper.”

“*Attempt* at robbery your highness means, for I had the best of the battle, though I was not aware of it until afterwards; they found me lying senseless by the side of the highwayman, whose face I had hammered most delightfully, with my riding whip. Having recovered .

us both, they sent me home in a cab, and tried to take the robber to the station house, but he must be a most desperate ruffian, for notwithstanding the effects of the struggle, he managed to break from them, and escape; and I understand that from his face being so covered with blood, they are enabled to give but a very imperfect description of the rascal; so that in all probability he will escape getting his deserts for this once.—By the way what do people say of the affair? -

“ Oh! nothing is talked of but your extraordinary presence of mind, and bravery; you will be quite a hero in the salons henceforward. Fate seems to mark you out for hair-breadth escapes, and dangerous adventures.”

“ I am afraid,” said Biron, “ I am becoming a notorious character.”

“ Notorious! your carriage will be pointed at by the *hoi polloi*, as you pass along, your popularity is prodigious; so much so that like the Egyptian king of old, I should recommend

you to throw a ring into the river as a libation to misfortune."

"The ring of Polycrates was returned to him if I remember," said Lord Wilsdown musingly.

"Yes, from the body of a sole I believe," said Aurelius, laughing.

"If mine were to be ever returned," said Mesmer, with an odd smile, "it would be from the soul of a body."

Neither the Prince nor Lady Wilsdown saw the precise drift of this play upon words, nor did Mesmer wish them to do so, for he instantly turned the conversation to other topics.

"Your highness has become terribly addicted to metaphysics lately I understand," said Biron.

"Yes," replied the Prince, "glad to see the dialogue turn upon his favorite subjects, yes I have been deep in Plato, Kant, and Hegel again ; as some French proverb, if I remember

rightly," says "*nous revenons à nos premiers amours*, we return to the loves of our youth."

"And what do you now think of your *premiers amours*?" said Augusta, smiling.

"I think they all, more or less, approached truth, but (excuse the truism) none of them grasped it; perhaps the Pythagoreans came nearer to the grand secret than any, but we know, unfortunately, so little of their doctrines!"

"For my part I think philosophy, (properly so called)," said Mesmer, "a very fruitless study; to discover unity in variety, the object I believe of all metaphysical enquiries, appears to me impossible according to our human natures, perhaps altogether but a sublime blunder.—Were I about to erect a temple to truth, I should write over the portal these words,"

"*Infinite powers, infinite change, universal life, universal death—eternal reproduction!*"

"I do not agree with you in the impossibility of the mind of man, penetrating even the

loftiest secrets of nature, but I have seen the vanity of endeavouring, physically to account for the phenomena by which we are surrounded," said Aurelius, and the necessity of turning the eye inwards rather than outwards in search of that divine mystery, which has baffled the profoundest thinkers of so many ages.

"The profoundest thinkers are easily baffled," said Mesmer, laughing, "for in a general way they dive so deeply in the gulf of hypothesis, that it is quite a wonder if they ever again rise to the surface. *Savoir vivre*, the art of making the best of every thing, is after all the most rational philosophy, and Epicurus was right to shrink from the scepticism of abstract meditation, and teach his disciples that which was, and always will be of the greatest importance to mankind, the art of being happy (although I differ slightly with him in his view of pleasure, and rather hold with the latter

offspring of his school) and the best road to enjoyment."

"Epicurus taught how to live, I would learn how to die," said Aurelius gloomily.

"Nothing can be more simple, derange the organic system, disturb the harmony of chemical combination, and the body is resolved into dust, the soul to air, galvanism, magnetic fluid, —whatever it may be."

"But were that the case, why these instincts, these presentiments of future states of being, this "longing after immortality," implanted in our minds, a faculty of the soul, entirely independent of that love of life and self preservation, so necessary to our corporeal safety. Show me any other innate faculty or desire leading to false results, and I will give up my point."

"The Socratic or Platonic mode of arguing from analogy is very illogical," said Biron, quietly, "perhaps you will say we have a faculty of comparison, but that is open to the

same objection ; however if I stay here any longer you will be trying to convert me, so I must be off.

When bishop Berkeley said there was no matter ;
It was no matter what he said.

To enjoy is to be wise, all the rest is uncertainty ; by the way I cured my fever by cold water, and talked magnetism to the physician, in order to get rid of him, but I must go and lay down now, or I shall have a relapse—pray stay where you are, Prince, and talk metaphysics to Augusta, she has grown as fond of them as yourself lately,” added Mesmer as he left the room with the shadow of a sneer in his voice.

Nothing could be more opportune ! thought he, and ringing the bell of his dressing room, he said in a significant tone to the footman who answered it—

“Let to day *be the day*—you understand, remember my instructions ; and the housemaid, is she within ?”

“ Yes sir,” said the footman with something
• excessively resembling a confidential wink.

“ Ah !” muttered Biron, as soon as the
servant was gone, “ wait till the deed is once
done—and you will find yourself mistaken, if
you imagine that you will be permitted any
insolent familiarity — these wretches always
presume upon one’s condescension, but upon
my *honor* ! it is most prodigiously apropos !”

CHAPTER VII

EROS.

“I have called,” said Aurelius to Augusta, when Biron had left them, “in order to bid you farewell.”

“Farewell? Where then are you going—a trip to Baden Baden, or Paris, or do you contemplate revisiting your estates in Germany?”

“I may wander through many lands,” re-

plied Aurelius, " but the places you have mentioned will scarcely be included in my plan ; I do not go to seek, but to avoid a crowd, and as for my native country, deprived as my family has been of its hereditary rights, and despoiled of its crown by diplomatic treachery, I feel little inclination again to enter it. "

" You are not a victim to the *Heim-Weh* then, like the rest of your countrymen ?"

" No ; I am a cosmopolite, and resemble the dog rather than the cat in my attachments

" That is to say, you prefer people to places ?"

" Exactly so—to the wretched all places are alike."

" But you who are a philosopher ought not to be wretched," said Augusta, gently, looking in the face of the Prince with her soft, dark sapphire-like eyes.

"The true philosophy of life for *me* yet re-

mains to be discovered. Biron has found it---no wonder, he is yours !---but I---”

“ You too will find happiness in the love of some bright being a thousand times superior in mind and beauty to---”

“ Stay, that is profanation---yet I do not deny that there is that which consoles the lonely and bleeding spirit in the inspired pages of wisdom and poetry ; and there are moments when I doubt whether the visions of imagination are not grander and truer than the most laboured reasonings of the understanding ; but I must learn to bear the sufferings that cannot be cured ; nay, there are even tortures which the heart may cherish until they become a species of withering pleasure, woes, which were a god to offer us oblivion, we still should cling to as our costliest treasures !”

“ The Prince paused for a moment, and strove in vain to master the whirl of emotion which convulsed his whole being. Involuntarily he had clasped the little soft white hand

of Augusta in his own, and she, pitying the evident state of his feelings, did not attempt to withdraw it. At this moment protruded from between the folding doors a human head, adorned by a cap redundant in blue ribbands of a satin radiancy, that bordered on—on—not sublimity, but some very broad cast off lace of her generous mistress. This head appertained to the housemaid. It was a wonder that the corners of the lace on her cap did not grow into her eyes, as a just retribution for the perfidy and ingratitude she meditated.

“But you will return?—we shall see you again?”

“Never.”

“But that is dreadful!” exclaimed Augusta, who, if she did not love the Prince as he desired, entertained for him the purest, most sincere, and sisterly friendship.

“Shall you really regret my absence?”

“Do we not always regret the absence of an old and dear friend!”

“ Ah! it is useless to stay and live in the increasing and fiery restlessness of pain! No, I must go far, far away,—on, on, like the eternal wanderer of the fable, and oh! Augusta, dear—dearest adored Augusta!—”

“ Hush! you must not speak thus, prince. I must leave you if you persist in doing so.”

“ No, Augusta, you may listen to me now—now that I am about to fly to the remotest regions of the earth—to go, never to return; I may tell you the secrets of a heart which never yet shared its confidence with living man; I may tell—you tell you that I love you fondly, madly, hopelessly, and eternally love you.”

And Aurelius threw himself on his knees before the Countess and sobbed like a child in her lap. Where now was the pride, the dignity, the *philosophy* of the great, the talented, the honored de Rosenberg!

“ Your highness! I entreat,” began Augusta

unable to repress the tears of sympathy which the sufferings of Aurelius drew from her affectionate and sensitive nature ; but she strove in vain to assume the cold air of offended propriety suitable, or as the reader (if his morals be less immaculate than we charitably take them to be) may conceive *unsuitable* to the occasion.

“ No, it is in vain the intellect would reason with the passions, in vain we strive to persuade ourselves that the affections are the slaves of our understanding. Religious creeds, systems of logic, ethics, and metaphysics have passed away, like withered leaves before the winds of autumn, but *Love* is a god eternal, indestructible ; his power is as great to-day as at the dawn of creation ; his temple is in the human heart, and all mankind are his priesthood. Well might the most subtile imagination of modern poetry—well might the great Shelley call love the principle of the universe !”

“ Love is the destiny of man, it is the *arcnum* of his soul, and ever beneath the ponderous mountain of science, habit, and ambition, the giant passion paramount. Never can you conceive the agony, the struggle, it has cost me to resist this passion !

“ Augusta !” exclaimed Aurelius springing to his feet, and gazing upon her countenance with a wild despair which chilled her almost to faintness, “ I go—must it be alone ?”

“ Farewell ! do not act rashly ; we may yet be friends—but never, *never* more !”

“ Farewell ! I never believed in broken hearts till now ; we part for ever, one sister’s kiss, and Aurelius de Rosenberg exists for you no longer !”

Without another word Aurelius passionately pressed his lips to the forehead of Augusta, and departed with a rapid but firm step, and a composure which despair gave him nerve to command.

“ Ah, that Mesmer could love me like this man ! thought Augusta.”

“ Ah, that such an angel should be linked to one so little capable of appreciating her !” thought de Rosenberg, “ that he, the careless voluptuary, the man of dress and parties and polkas should be peaceful and blessed, whilst I, Aurelius, the student of every philosophy that ever was formed, to benefit my race—I, the searcher after truth, the lover of mankind, the curer of disease, the consoler of misfortune, go forth an exile and an outcast, to roam the ocean and the desert in search of that peace which the tomb alone can, lastingly, offer !”

“ What would have been thy feelings, O Aurelius, at that moment had the *whole* truth been then revealed to thee !”

But the car of time rolls on.

Neither the Prince nor Lady Wilsdown had remarked that a few minutes previous to the departure of the former, a footman had entered the room, and then, as if unwilling to disturb their conversation, retreated, unobserved, by the

same way he had entered, and subsequently remained upon the landing outside until after Aurelius's departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

MATERNITY.

MEANWHILE, Clara with slow and mournful pace pursued her homeward way ; for ever vanished her dearest hopes, she now felt all her love, all her earthly interest concentrated in her darling child, who, though sickly at first, had now become a remarkably healthy boy, whose face gave promise of a beauty little inferior to that of his unprincipled father, and in its chubby proportions formed a powerful

contrast to the pallid and sickly look of his mother's countenance.

When Clara reached home, the first thing she did was to inquire for her child.

"La ma'am ;" cried the servant, " I gave it to the person you sent for it, at least half an hour ago."

" What ! I sent no person !"

" Well, mum, he said he came from Mrs. Gordon, and that you was staying at a friend's, and—"

" Good God !" exclaimed the unfortunate young mother in an agony of distress, " and you gave this person the child ?"

" Yes ma'am—but pray don't take on so ; how *could* we know it was not all right—Oh, dear, dear !"

" Merciful powers ! it is a device of Alfred's, to punish me for the discoveries I made to his wife this morning !—but it is impossible—he cannot be so cruel as to deprive me of my child ; I will go to him at once, and

beg him to tell me where it is ; I will go down upon my knees ; I will never let him have any rest till he tells me. Oh, this is dreadful !—but it must be *he* who has taken away the child—it could be nobody else—and yet if it were ?”

The terrified mother instantly rushed from the house ; a cab offered itself opportunely.

“ Cab, mum ?” said the driver.

“ Yes, yes—quick !” exclaimed Clara.

“ Where to, mum ?”

“ Belgrave Square ; lose no time ; you shall be well paid.”

“ Greased lightning wouldn’t come up with me, as the Yankee doodles say,” retorted the cabman slamming the door of his vehicle ; and away they went.

At first Clara did not observe that the blinds were all up, nor on perceiving this fact, did she attach any importance to it, her mind was so completely engrossed by the one absorbing object. At length it occurred to her to look out

and see how far they had progressed ; accordingly she endeavoured to pull down the blinds, when to her astonishment she discovered that they were so securely fastened up by nails, as to defy all her efforts.

“ We ought to be there by now,” thought she after a time, “ it is very strange ; we seem to drive very fast, too.”

Again she endeavoured to loosen the blinds with equal ill success ; she then tried to attract the attention of the driver. In vain, he took not the slightest notice of her repeated taps and knocks. Of course she could not see that a man had mounted the box by the side of the driver, and that that man was no other than Sago, the honourable Count's confidential valet and universal emissary. Equally little had she observed, in her hurry to enter the supposed cab, that it was, in fact, no cab at all, but a private Brougham of our friend Mesmer's in which she was now being carried a prisoner, the devil, the Count, and Sago, his

valet, alone knew whither. Suddenly she heard a strange, whizzing sound, followed by a violent jerk, then all was still. Clara felt convinced that all was not right ; she screamed and knocked, and screamed again, to no purpose.

“She is a mad lady,” said Sago, the valet ; and that, mechanically speaking, clenched the business, and effectually precluded all external interference.

They were on the railway, upon their way to Wilsdown Castle ; how can words describe the feelings of the poor girl, in an agony of impatient anxiety at the loss of her child, in utter darkness, ignorant as to where she was, or whither she was going. It seemed, in truth, like diabolical agency, the cold perspiration of fear burst from her forehead, and she sought in fervent prayer a refuge from the horrors that surrounded her.

Nothing could be more ingenious, and at the same time simple, than this scheme of Mes-

mer's. He calculated from his knowledge of her maternal feelings, and felt not even a momentary doubt of the success of the enterprise. The child gone—of course she would suspect him—of course her first idea would be to hasten back to his house—of course she would take the first cab that offered, *et voila tout !*

But this was a mere bagatelle, and having once set it going, our adventurer did not give it a second thought, unless it was to regret the inevitable day's absence of the trusty Sago, whose aid he especially required in the plots now rapidly hatching in the dark and voluminous recesses of his fertile and inventive intellect.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DENOUEMENT.

A FINE thing is the freedom of the press, and no doubt extremely useful in keeping down abuses, and giving people, wrong or right, political notions, without which it is true they would, in all probability, be much happier, but then happy ignorance is a stupid, clownish, Idyllic *Tityre-tu-patulæ* state of existence, and totally unworthy of an enlightened money-making, steam-exhaling, smoke-breathing, all-

work-and-no-play-enjoying country like the glorious land we live in. Newspapers too are fine things for shewing up rogues at the bar of public opinion, (decidedly the most unjust judge off the bench), pity that they so frequently damn the characters of the most virtuous individuals—by mistake.

But then you know they contradict it, the next day or the next week, when they discover their error?

Sometimes, but they do not always discover their error, and moreover errors are occasionally intentional, and then it is possible that one half the people who greedily devoured, and eagerly circulated *on the best authority*—what authority *can* be better than a newspaper?—the original calumny never chance to see or observe the contradiction, and so a few reputations are ruined. Not that we object to the freedom of the press ; were it assailed, we should be amongst its warmest supporters, as

it is not, we merely shew how the few suffer for the advantage of many.

Then again the liberty of the press is a fine check upon private morality, an excellent keeper of the conscience, of King, Lords, and Commons. So much so, that its penetration will discover your own, or your wife's evil deeds and lightest sins long before you yourself are aware of them, and by making them matters of universal notoriety, preclude the possibility of any such irregularities as reparation or forgiveness. Oh a glorious thing is the liberty of the press! out upon the dull cavillers who will tell you that the tyranny of public opinion is more complete and stringent than that of the most arbitrary despotism; the sceptre of newspaper editors, more heavy than the most ponderous cast iron rod of the unfettered autocrat! No, no, the liberty of the press is a priceless blessing, hurrah then my brave citizens for our homes, our taxes,

and our newspapers! into which when once a poor devil's name has entered, he hath indeed passed that infernal portal over which, as the Florentine tells us is inscribed,

“ *Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate.*”

“ When once the papers catch you—banish hope!”

The world—the Times, Chronicle, and Post-reading world—were electrified to read the hints of the shocking goings on of Lady W——n, and the unbecoming ornaments which had been added to the head of a certain Count de B—r—n, simultaneously with the coronet he had just obtained. They could not say more at present, but hoped to give *further particulars* to-morrow. Meanwhile common rumour was uncommonly busy, the scandalmongers were scandalized in the most delightful manner. Nothing could be more piquant, more mysterious, and more interesting. Jupiter! how the old maids, and ladies'

companions turned up their eyes! with what pious horror and ominous dignity they wagged the red peaks of their chins and noses,—“Well I declare!”—“did any body ever?” “how shocking”—“just what I expected, I told you so”—“how *very* disgraceful!”

“You have heard of course,” said the honorable Captain Somerton, to his friend Lord Friskerton, with whom he was taking a slight *dejeuner* “of the row at the Count de Biron, or rather Lord Wilsdown’s yesterday evening?”

“Not a word, what was it all about?” inquired Friskerton with interest.

“About!—why it is a most shocking affair—you remember what you were saying of Prince Aurelius, and the Countess, to me, the night of that unlucky masquerade?”

“I do, what then? I was mistaken.”

“You were *not* mistaken.”

“How?”

“You were quite right.”

“ Well don’t keep one in this vile state of suspense—what has happened?”

“ Prince Aurelius de Rosenberg,” replied Somerton speaking with solemn deliberation—to give weight and importance to his news, was caught in *flagrante delicto*, as the legal crew have it, with Augusta Lady Wilsdown, formerly Countess de Biron.

“ Damnation ! Somerton — do you really mean what you say ?”

“ ‘There is no doubt of the fact she has left Biron’s house, and taken refuge with——’ ”

“ The Prince ?”

“ No !—her parents.”

“ Ha ! that is strange, there seems yet to be a gleam of hope ; but explain the particulars as far as you have heard.”

“ Of course there is always a degree of uncertainty about these matters, and it is very difficult to get at the precise facts, but I had it on pretty good authority.—Biron’s man met

mine and told him all about it, he retailed to me as I was dressing this morning."

"*Canaille !*" muttered Friskerton.

"Well I tell you my source of information, that you may know what credit to attach to its truth. It seems that Biron, who is still suffering severely from that affair with the highwayman, had gone to bed, leaving the Prince alone with Lady Wilsdown."

"Pah ! it is horrible to reflect upon," exclaimed Friskerton, "her husband ill, suffering, and she—pah !"

"Just pass me a cotelette," said Somerton, who by no means felt his appetite spoiled by the infamies, as the French would say, "he was narraty" but if anything rather the reverse as indeed, generally speaking, we are qualified by or, at the least, indifferent to the mishap of our acquaintance. With Friskerton it was different, he had known Augusta previous to her marriage, and entertained for her the great-

est esteem, besides Lord Wilsdown was, maugre his flirtation with the Duchess of Villersden, the Earl's most intimate and valued friend.

“Well,” continued the Captain, “it seems Biron left his wife with the Prince, and that both by the housemaid and the footman was seen—

* * * *

“But how the devil could the housemaid or the footman enter the room without being observed? And how came they to do so?”

“The result of mere accident, the girl went into the adjoining room, which opens by folding doors into the drawing room to fetch something, or to do something, or dust something, or take ——”

“Never mind what she want there to do, but how came she to see or hear?”

“ The folding doors were ajar---*voilà tout !*”

“ And the footman.”

“ Entered the room with a message from the Count, but they were so busily engaged—in conversation, that they did not perceive his presence, and he retreated unobserved and saw the rest through the key-hole.”

“ Frailty, thy name is woman !” exclaimed Friskerton, “ now do you know Somerton, I would have staked my fortune—nay my existence upon the eternal chastity of the Countess de Biron !”

“ It is indeed too bad, the first year of their being married too !”

“ Oh it is horrible ! and he in pain, sick from the effects of a murderous assault, I can scarcely grasp such unfeeling vice in one apparently so perfect a personification of innocence and purity itself.”

“ It is surprising how the passions once excited, will subdue the most heroic virtue.”

“ After all, women are weak miserable

creatures" — thank God! added Friskerton, bitterly, "that I am not, and never shall be a marrying man!"

At this moment a servant entered with a letter.

"It is from Lord Wilsdown," muttered Friskerton—"wishes to see me immediately—render him important services—anybody waiting for an answer?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Say I will be with his lordship in an hour."

"Very well, my lord."

"Here will be a duel!" exclaimed the Captain, when the menial had left them.

"I fear so," said Lord Friskerton.

"A duel between a German Prince, and an English peer—what a sensation it will produce!"

"I trust it may be avoided."

"Avoided!—to be sure, the seconds *are* punished almost as severely as the principals

now-a-days, you would have to cut and run to France, in case of a fatal termination. I had forgotten that."

"Pshaw!" replied Friskerton, "you fancy every one is as selfish as yourself!"

"Many a true word is spoken in jest," said the captain.

CHAPTER X.

VENGEANCE.

“ You see how it is,” said Mesmer concluding a narrative differing less in fact, than in greater minuteness of detail, from that contained in the preceding chapter, “ there is but one course to be taken.”

“ You have no reason to doubt the evidence of these servants ?” said Lord Friskerton.

“ Why, what earthly interest could they have to belie one who, however bad a wife, was always a most kind and excellent *mistress* ?—excuse the pun—it was accidental, I assure you,” added Biron with bitter sarcasm.

“ Lady Wilsdown denies everything ?”

“ Calls heaven and earth to witness her innocence, and the falsehood of the footman and housemaid, as a matter of course !” replied Biron in the same bitter tone.

“ Then you are determined upon fighting the Prince ?”

“ I am ; and upon shooting him dead, if he accepts my challenge !” rejoined Mesmer with a savage thirst for revenge in his manner, which, if not natural, was the *ne plus ultra* of successful dissimulation.

“ But calm yourself ; this excitement, considering your recent indisposition, may—”

“ No matter—I am quite well now—but

were I dying, my honor must be avenged ; you will not refuse me this favour."

" Well—no," rejoined Lord Friskerton who was the very soul of honour himself, " I am afraid it must be—I will go to the Prince this very afternoon—but there was something else you said you wished to ask me ?"

" Oh, a mere trifle—yet I hardly like to mention it—it may offend you ; I am about to ask you for that which frightens the ordinary run of men of this world, more than even a duel, which heaven knows in this land of freedom they are sufficiently alarmed at !"

" True ; foreigners would think us d—d cowards occasionally, if they saw the correspondences published in the daily, journals, in which one or both of the combatants seem to have but one object ; to back out of the fighting part of the business, with as little disgrace as may be. But what is it you were about

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to ask me ; you know you may command me in everything ?”

“ Briefly, then, I require a loan.”

“ Is that all ?—I expected something that involved some risk or trouble at the least.”

“ This may involve both—the risk of never getting back the money, and the trouble of getting it.”

“ Nonsense—jesting apart, what is the sum you require ?”

“ Well, the fact is, that I have been living rather extravagantly, and was thinking of levying a mortgage on my Wilsdown estate ; but really I am so harassed with these domestic misfortunes, that it would be a great accommodation if, to save all trouble, you would lend me ten thousand pounds for a month or two. I will give you my bond of course.”

“ Certainly, certainly,” said Lord Friskerton, “ it shall be done, but—”

“The amount is larger than you anticipated, it will inconvenience you?”

“Not in the least, but I cannot let you have it until the day after to-morrow; will that do?” replied Friskerton, who was in reality at first a little staggered at the magnitude of the demand.

“Thank you my friend, you can imagine how hateful, at the present moment, any attention to business, especially pecuniary matters, must be; from this you relieve me, and in a couple of months at the latest--”

“Say no more about it; you recollect our conversation on our way to Richmond?”

“Yes, I remember,” replied Biron; “I remember the *feeler* I tried on that occasion,” thought he to himself, with secret triumph at the success of his scheme.

“Well, I believe we then decided upon the value of pecuniary obligation, so restrain all expressions of thanks, until I can render you some real service.”

“ And that you can do, my dear Friskerton, by hastening at once to this detested Prince de Rosenberg, and appointing as early an hour as possible to-morrow morning, for our meeting.’

“ It shall be done—farewell for the present, I shall come at once to let you know the result of my interview with Prince Aurelius, and remember that you must be prepared to leave the country immediately, should you be unlucky enough mortally to wound de Rosenberg.”

“ You may well say *unlucky enough*—no, no, I have not practised daily for six months past, at the shooting gallery, for nothing. What is the punishment of death to that of life with a deficient or crippled limb? No, no, he shall not be *mortally* wounded !”

“ I do not like this vindictive ferocity,” thought Friskerton, “ it is painful to witness ; I shall find you at home ?” added he aloud.

“ You had better dine with me at six, if you are not better engaged.”

“ Pshaw ! every other engagement should be set aside on occasions like this, so *au revoir !*”

CHAPTER XI.

SCENES !

THE two friends ate and drank in gloomy silence, until the removal of the cloth freed them from the presence of the servants, when Mesmer, having filled his glass with some matchless *Sauterne*, and passed the bottle to Lord Friskerton, said in a tone of angry disappointment—

“ And so he is resolved not to fight ? ”

“ His determination is immutable ; he asserts most vehemently, and confirms by the most solemn oaths, the innocence of both Lady Wilsdown and himself, although he owns that circumstances might appear against them.”

“ Circumstances appear against them ! Oh, yes, the guiltless lambs ! why had they been found * * * they would have asserted their innocence, and *circumstances* would have been against them !”

“ But indeed, Biron, if ever face bore the impress of sincerity, it was de Rosenberg’s, and I cannot help imagining that the servants may have exaggerated, or even—”

“ Good heavens !” continued Mesmer as if unconscious of Friskerton’s last words, “ such unprincipled baseness, such mean and cowardly falsehood in one of royal race is fearfully contemptible !”

At this moment a loud knock at the door was heard, after some time, followed by strug-

gling in the hall. The door was thrown violently open, and a tall figure, muffled in a cloak entered, followed by a footman with a deranged neckcloth.

"I thought I told you to admit no one?" said Biron fiercely.

"My lord, this person insisted upon seeing you, and forced his way in, in spite of all my resistance."

"You can go," said the stranger to the servant in a tone of stern and lofty command, which the menial scarcely hesitated to obey.

"Yes, go," said Biron, suddenly reflecting that whoever the stranger might be, it was just possible that he had something to communicate, which it would be as well for the footman to remain in ignorance of."

"And now, sir, pray inform me of the reason of this unseasonable intrusion, and also with whom I have the honour of speaking?" said Mesmer grandly.

The stranger calmly removed his hat, threw back his cloak, and discovered—Aurelius.

“ You !” exclaimed Biron fiercely, “ you ! and what means this boldness, this additional, and unnecessary insult ? Coward ! though weak from recent illness and agitation, I may yet have strength to inflict that chastisement you deserve, since you refuse me the just satisfaction I requested ! and Mesmer rose, and would have rushed upon the Prince, had not Lord Friskerton laid his hand upon his shoulder, and, whilst endeavouring to restrain him, said emphatically—

“ Hear what his highness has to say ; it is but just, and do not degrade yourself by personal violence, I entreat !”

“ Speak, then,” said Biron with a sudden calmness that at another time would have excited surprise, “ why, after doing me the most deadly wrong that one man can inflict upon another, do you again venture beneath my roof ?”

“Had I, indeed, so basely violated your hospitality,” replied Aurelius, who had maintained a dignified and unmoved posture during Lord Wilsdown’s outbreak, “I should not be here, nor, however repugnant the whole system of duelling may be to my moral convictions, should I have refused to give you the satisfaction to which you would have been entitled.”

“Indeed?” said Mesmer with a withering sneer.

“You sneer, my lord,” said Aurelius, with difficulty restraining his passion, “but the time may come when you will be called to account for the title of coward you dared but now to brand me with. I make allowance for your excited feelings.”

“I humbly thank your highness,” rejoined Biron with icy scorn, and a bow of satirical politeness.

“Do not imagine,” resumed Aurelius, by a tremendous effort preserving his external calmness of demeanour, “that I have come

from any personal motive to this accursed mansion, but justice, honour, and love, ay, *love*, demand that I should at least attempt, by a plain statement of the truth, to exculpate her who has been partly, through my folly, so fearfully a sufferer."

"*Love* demands it?" said Biron in the same tone of chilling sarcasm, "ha—ha—ha! your candour at any rate does your highness credit!" and to keep up the farce, the Impostor commenced slowly tearing to shreds the napkin he held in his hand.

"Listen my lord," continued Aurelius sternly, with a truthfulness in his voice that compelled Friskerton to waver in his belief of his guilt; "you have been basely and infamously deceived."

"Prove it!" said Mesmer with cutting coldness.

"Surely!" exclaimed the Prince with a burst of generous indignation, "*some* weight is to be ascribed to the word, the truth of a

man—a noble—a prince—whose name was never before tainted by the breath of dishonor. Tell me one oath more solemn, more sacred than another, and I will swear by it to the innocence of Augusta and myself.” The Prince stopped—he could not help blushing at having unconsciously made use of the familiarity of the christian name of Lady Wilsdown.

Mesmer exchanged a rapid but significant glance with Lord Friskerton.

“Whatever torture it may be,” resumed Aurelius “in the hope that the light of truth must and will shine through and scatter the baneful mists of falsehood by which your mind and understanding are at this moment obscured, I will confess the dearest secrets of my heart, and expose the inmost recesses of my soul to the view of hostile and scornful eyes; but beware how you tempt me with outward marks of disbelief;” and there was a noble pride, a sublimity in the expression and attitude of the Prince’s towering form

which had awed any man less desperately wicked than the impostor, whose soul, steeped in crime, deceit, and hypocrisy, was utterly impregnable to the influence of the loftiest virtue. With a smile of derision, he listened to the words of Aurelius.

“ I loved her,” began de Rosenberg, “ I love her still—*how*, it is not for me here to tell !—but I should have regarded myself as the vilest refuse of creation, had I entertained a dishonorable thought towards your peace. I could bear no longer the torments of a passion unreturned, and determined upon leaving this country for ever ; I came to bid farewell to all that could have rendered earth endurable, and —” here the Prince gave a vivid and animated account of every circumstance and word, to the most minute particulars which his memory could furnish, that had taken place during his last interview with Augusta.

“ That is *your* story,” said Biron with un-

moved composure, "now, two credible, and what is more, *disinterested* witnesses tell the tale somewhat differently."

"Yes, two servants who probably nourish some paltry spite against their lady."

"Lady Wilsdown told me of nothing of the kind, and as for their being servants, the testimony of one human being is as good as another."

"That I deny—but let me be confronted with these lying wretches, let me see if they can bear my look without blenching, and repeat their miserable inventions without prevarication."

"Let it be so, then," said Mesmer after a moment's reflection, during which he arrived at the conclusion that there would be no danger in the experiment, "and believe me, I should be but too happy were they proved to be liars and slanderers ; but mind, no intimidation, no threats ; cross-examine them as

much as it pleases you ; in the hands of Lord Friakerton I place my honor ; let him decide whether or no their veracity remains unshaken by your questions."

So saying, Biron rang the bell, and ordered the footman and the housemaid to be sent up to them.

They came. With the keenness of a Wylde or a Kelly, Aurelius questioned them. In vain were all his attempts to cause them to contradict one another. So well were they drilled, so ingeniously was the false interwoven with the true, that at length the Prince gave up the attempt in despair, exclaiming passionately, "oh that by the sacrifice of my life I could establish her innocence !"

"I wish you could," said Mesmer grimly, "but you will not fight—and yet you appear to acknowledge almost every fact asserted by these witnesses, except the——"

"Except the only fact of any real importance !" interrupted Aurelius bitterly —does no

remembrance of your past friendship weigh in my favor? you surely do not suspect me of attempting to shield myself from your resentment by a cowardly or contemptible perjury?"

"No, candidly, Prince," replied Mesmer, sternly, "I am convinced *now* that but one motive could prompt you to such unheard of audacity of falsehood, if that it be a falsehood, the sincerity and violence of your accursed passion; I acquit you of cowardice provided—but it is for lord Friskerton to decide whether you have succeeded in invalidating the testimony of these two persons."

"Your highness! deeply as my feelings are affected by all you have said, however my heart may incline to believe what you have stated, I cannot conscientiously see any reason to discredit the evidence of the servants, or to justify my friend in acknowledging the innocence of Lady Wilsdown. To a man of honour like yourself, I feel that to lie, to perjure yourself, to save the woman you loved, would

be an act of the most devoted heroism, for had you a thousand lives, their sacrifice I am convinced would cost you infinitely less pain !”

“ Oh God !” exclaimed de Rosenberg, struck with horror and amazement, at this new and unfortunate view of the case taken by the Earl, “ no,” he continued after a pause during which he pressed his hand to his forehead, as if to check the incipient confusion of his intellect. “ I doubt, whether to save the woman I loved from the torments of the rack, of hell itself, were there in existence such a place, I could act as you imagine—but I do not accuse you of injustice, unfortunate circumstance, the lies of these wretches—I will inquire, I will—miserable reptiles !” he exclaimed abruptly turning to the two servants, who trembled beneath the basiliskine fierceness of his look—“ recant, before it is too late, or——

“ I will have no intimidation—go, you have destroyed my peace, be content, let the law decide the rest.”

“ You will go to law ?---O, heaven! to what horrors has my folly given up this pure, this angelic victim !”

“ Think you, I will bear my wrongs in weeping patience,” said Mesmer, “ or live even in name united to——

“ Stay, no blasphemy ! hell burns within my soul---I shall go mad”---here Aurelius turned once more to the two quaking and perjured menials who would have slunk from the room but that his standing before the door cut off their escape, “ The time *will* come !” he thundered, and with a gesture of despair, rushed once more from the house, which for the last time he had entered.

He hastened to the Merlmore's, he repeated there his asseverations of his own and Augusta's innocence, they were readily believed ; he threw himself at the feet of Augusta, and besought her to fly with him to the Continent ; guiltless as she was, there was not a ray of hope that her character could be saved, her

honor was lied away, but not the less lost—had she yielded, would she have been to blame, or the monster who so remorselessly sacrificed her? Alas! few know how many parallel cases are constantly occurring! how often poor defenceless woman is immolated at the shrine of man's dark selfishness!

Oh, sadly is the chivalry of old degenerated! that so few are found to rise in their defence. Shall I, who am a man—and I assert my manhood because certain long-sighted critics have discovered, in the soft effeminacy of my style, in a former work, incontrovertible evidence to the contrary—shall I then be silent? no glorious Eugene Sue! you are not the only Quixote of these unpoetical times; from England's misty shores, I faintly echo back the noble, though unpalatable, truths, you utter with such boldness and such energy!

The days of the lance and the sword are past, it is true, and we regret them not, although the boiling blood of youth once

pictured them in such delightful colors, and in the days of student devil-may-careism, we remember with a laugh the fierce challenge, originating in a young lady's shoe string! Such days are gone, and happily, but for the Quixotes (and Quixote *was* a hero) of the modern age, exists a longer lance, a more trenchant sword, one that extends from continent to continent, and pierces the remotest recesses of the earth, the pen, "kind nature's noblest gift—the grey goose quill!" at whose back whole armies rise of fearless partizans, of indefatigable warriors, regiments of clearly printed volumes, each in itself a host—an orator secure of a numerous audience, who never can turn their coats or with the inconsistency of faction contradict one another's assertions, but fight to the last drop of their ink, to the last cotton thread that *unites* their *pages* for the principles they so unswervingly advocate!

To return to Augusta we repeat that *had* she yielded to the passionate solicitations of Aurelius, though blameable, she could scarcely have been condemned, but she did *not* yield.

“No Prince,” she exclaimed, “however I may be revolted at the conduct of Lord Wilsdown, for I cannot resist the suspicion that he but too well knows the falsehood of his accusation, and were I not bound to the most solemn secrecy, could disclose that which would at least justify my suspicion. I am resolved, whilst legally his wife, to preserve, at least, the consciousness of virtue—hereafter——”

“Oh, Augusta!” exclaimed the Prince, “then you no longer love this — monster, as he must be, if there is but the shadow of truth in your supposition?”

“Love him!” exclaimed Augusta, “no! that one scene of cold, unpitying insult has obliterated for ever all that I ever felt of

affection towards him. Love him!— words cannot express my loathing, my deadly abhorrence !”

Aurelius scarcely recognised the gentle and patient Augusta, as she uttered these startling sentiments. Unable to conceal his joy, he seized her hand, and covering it with kisses, said in an almost inaudible voice, “do you— can you—do you think that you can love me me—but a little?”

She did not reply. Aurelius rose, he clasped her in his arms, impressed one daring kiss upon her rosy lips, and whispered in her ear whilst her cast down eyes and blushing cheeks seemed to confirm the assertion—we may yet be happy !

CHAPTER XII.**THE TRIAL.**

THE action against Prince Aurelius 'Wilsdown, versus Rosenberg'—at length came on. The damages were laid at twenty thousand pounds, and the first counsel retained on both sides. The court was crowded to suffocation, and the newspaper reporters, (all the weekly journals having sent a special short-handwriter for the occasion) stood upon one another's heads

three deep—or would have done so, if they could; the numbers of solicitors demanding admittance in virtue of their office, was increased to an unparalleled extent, and junior barristers, who never had taken a fee in their lives, made comparative fortunes by the loan of their wigs and gowns for the occasion; nay it is even affirmed that all the judges kept wide awake during the whole course of the trial, and that the usher was only heard to disturb the court three times, by calling out “silence!” from the opening speech of the plaintiff’s junior, to the final decision of the judges being dictated to the jury.

Fifty witnesses were examined for the plaintiff, and eleven, on behalf of the defendant, were duly bullied by the opposing sergeant, with the most satisfactory results; we are not about to give a lengthened detail of the trial, but cannot refrain from presenting the reader with an authentic specimen or two of the way in which witnesses are occasionally

used, or rather abused, in the courts of justice, of the most free and enlightened country of the world. If we are accused of exaggeration, we can only recommend the reader to take an occasional stroll into the courts at Westminster, and *probatum erat*. Now be it remembered that a witness is presumed to be a perfectly innocent and disinterested person, summoned to aid the ends of justice by testifying to certain facts, with which he is acquainted, and under such circumstances merits protection, and politeness at the least. (If every body had their deserts!) but the the most absurd part of the matter is the altogether irrevelant queries constantly put by the barristers, frequently about as [germane to the point, really in question, as that popular enquiry we have all of us heard in the streets of London, from the lips of the vulgar, relative to the knowledge of a man's nearest female relative, of his absence from home, or the insinuation to a passer by that he walketh along with his eye out, or that his horse hath had the

misfortune to drop that ornamental spinal continuation, vernacularly denominated his tail, in favour of which, as in the celebrated case of the noses of the prophets, popular prejudice is supposed to run.

“And so you never saw the Countess de Biron *late in the evening*, at your master's house?” said Sergeant Rawbite, grimly, to a female servant of the Prince's, who, like all the rest of the witnesses but two, had been summoned by Mesmer's orders, more for show than actual use.

“I never saw the——”

“Never mind what you never saw — did you or did you not see the Countess at your master's house *late in the evening* of last Friday ”

“No sir!” said the witness, frightened and brow-beaten by the savage manner of the lawyer.”

“*Not late in the evening ?*”

“No sir !”

“That if not on *Friday*—it was on Thursday then?”

“No sir!”

“Oh, not *late in the evening* on Thursday—and pray how often did the countess make these morning calls you mentioned?”

“I did not mention——”

“Can you not reply to a straightforward question—I repeat *how often*?”

“Never, sir—never at all!”

“Remember that you are upon your oath—*how often* do you say?”

“I did not---I---”

“Your father was transported for forgery I believe?”

“My father transported——”

“For forgery, was he not? you are upon oath remember?”

“No—sir—never!”

“What! is not his name D——?”

“Yes sir!”

“ Well, and do you mean to say—he is now in England ?”

“ No sir, he is——”

“ In Australia ? now take care what you say.”

“ Yes sir—but——” stammered the girl.

“ And so you did not take the key of the garden door in a note to the Countess de Biron ?”

“ Yes sir, but my father——”

“ Never mind your father,” said the lawyer, gruffly, well knowing that he had *settled* at Swan river, whilst by his (Rawbite’s) ingenious questions and abrupt interruptions, he left a firm impression on the minds of the jury that the man was a convict, a fact which could not fail to throw suspicion upon her integrity.

“ And so you did not take a note from the Prince de Rosenberg ?”

“ Yes, I took a note, but——”

“ Oh ! you *did* take a note then, and pray was there nothing in that note.”

“Yes sir, but it was not——”

“Never mind what it was *not*, we want to know what it *was*?”

“It was something hard and round, I think ——”

“What business have you to think? hard and round you say?”

“Yes sir, I——”

“The ring of this key is hard and round gentlemen,” said the learned sergeant, producing a large key, “and this key I shall prove, by the next witness, was found in the Countess’s bed room, the morning after her departure.”

The truth was that Sago, the valet, had filched the key from the door it pertained to, and Biron had himself placed it in his wife’s chamber.

So saying Sergeant Rawbite sat down with an air of triumph, and left the poor witness to be cross-examined by his antagonist, but what could even the ingenuity of the great Grinder-

son do with facts purely imaginary, he could but make the witness do what she had done already---deny the facts, and state the simple truth, regarding the letter, and her conviction that it contained a coin or something of the kind.

“A very likely thing,” as Rawbite remarked with a sneer, “that the Prince would enclose money---perhaps a sovereign or a half crown to the Countess!”

“True---a small cameo was produced as the thing in question with the letter mentioning the fact---but then there was no witness of the Prince's having placed it in the letter, even if the Countess received it; ‘it looked like an after thought,’ as Rawbite again observed, and when one of Biron's servants swore, and truly, to finding the key in the bedroom of her mistress, not a doubt remained upon the minds of the jury, on that point at least.

The evidence of Sago, the footman, and the other housemaid put a finishing stroke to

the case, and a verdict, despite all Grinderson's eloquence, in favour of the defendant (of whose guilt, he in his heart, if lawyers *have* hearts, entertained not the slightest doubt)—a verdict we say was forthwith given in favour of our hero with *ten thousand pounds damages*, carrying costs, and putting him in a position to sue immediately for a divorce in the ecclesiastical court, a course he did not fail to adopt with the utmost possible expedition.

“And then for the Villersden!” muttered Biron --- married to a duchess, and the most beautiful woman in London, “I think I shall do---perhaps be a duke myself one of these days!”

But Mesmer's passion for the duchess did not prevent him from indulging in the most extravagant voluptuousness; accordingly the reader must not be surprised to hear his address to his valet.

“Sago said he is the little Neldoni safe, at Wilsdown, by this time?”

“Yes my lord!”

“Then order the carriage.”

“Yes my lord!”

“To the railway!” cried Mesmer, as he threw himself into his barouche. “By Jove! it was most splendidly managed—but after all I hate lawyers, they are a dry, dusty, musty, vulgar set of people, and the sight of their wigs—the judge’s in particular—is, anything but refreshing to to the eye of one who knows and understands the principles of the truly beautiful—it will be indeed a relief to see this graceful brunette of a Neapolitan perform one of her pas de fascinations—*Tonnerre de Dieu!* as one of those cursed Frenchmen said at the gambling house, the change is delightful, I shall positively melt away in rapture!”

CHAPTER XIII.

INFORMATION.

“ FIVE ? Mr. Monville, did you say *five* ? ”

“ Five—at the very least ! ” replied the attorney.

“ He is a pretty villain ! ” muttered Merlmore, at whose house the conversation, now recording, took place, shortly after the trial of Wilsdown *versus* Rosenberg.

“ He *is*, ” replied Monville, “ and knowing something more of him than the world in

general, I have come to you, notwithstanding the, I must say, very unceremonious way, in which I was treated."

"I am really much obliged to you, and can assure you that had I not been prejudiced against you by the Count—But you shall conduct my daughter's cause if you think there is any chance?"

"No doubt there is a chance; time must bring out the truth; if these servants have perjured themselves—"

"If," said Merlmore with a frown.

"Excuse me," said the lawyer, hastily amending his mistake, "I am merely putting the case—if, if they have perjured themselves, as of course they have, there is yet hope; but I will see what can be done regarding them, and let you know in a day or two, meanwhile we ought to collect all the evidence we can as to Lord Wilsdown's conduct and doings."

"Ah! and touching these five women you spoke of?"

“ Yes, they are all down at Wilsdown, and my informant tells me that the quantities of wine, ice, and delicacies of every kind sent down are prodigious, considering that nobody is presumed to be staying there but Lord Wilsdown ; a little time ago he had a magnificent self-playing organ brought there worth, it is said, above five thousand pounds !”

“ And nobody is admitted, you say.”

“ Nobody ; he is always out, when they call, and indeed, of late no one has attempted to visit him, it being pretty well understood in the county, that he is keeping a regular harem at the Castle.”

“ He must be prodigiously rich, or prodigiously near to ruin !” said Merlmore, who could scarcely help regretting that things had not run smoothly with so wealthy a son-in-law.

“ More likely the latter ; I could almost swear that I met him in disguise at a gambling house, in Paris, less than a year ago.”

“Impossible—excepting on a trip to Devonshire, to look at an estate, I do not think he left town for three days together ; besides, why should he gamble in disguise ?”

“ I cannot tell, but certainly the person I saw at ——’s *was* in disguise, and *was*, in feature and height, the *fac simile* of the Count ; the eyes were the same, although he wore spectacles, and even the moustache was the same shape, only colored grey ; he wore a wig, and as I said at the time, if it was not de Biron, it was the devil !”

“ Very likely ; but romantic as it would be, you must have been mistaken ; for setting aside the improbability of a man like the Count undertaking such a freak---especially at such a time—”

“ But remember he won above twenty thousand pounds.”

“ Well, setting all that aside, *when* could he have gone to Paris, considering that he never left London ?”

“ You say he went to Devonshire ?”

“ Ah ! true ; but what then ?”

“ Perhaps it was a *ruse*, and he went to Paris instead.”

“ But why should he go, at such a time especially ?”

“ To win money to perform a secret swindle, perhaps ; but I confess that there is a mystery about the whole affair which does, and always will, puzzle me ; but I must narrate the circumstance to you ; perhaps you may be able to throw some light upon the subject.”

“ Well,” said Monville, when he had finished the story of the hell adventure, “ what do you think of it, presuming the one player to have been the Count de Biron, who do you imagine was the other ?”

“ I have no idea ; it was very odd, certainly ; but likenesses are common.”

“ Yet there are few men like Lord Wilsdown ; have you ever yourself met anybody resembling him ?”

“ No, I must confess I have not ; but even if it were Biron, I fear it is not a fact that would assist our cause materially.”

“ No, no ; but it is strange how that meeting has occupied my mind ever since ; I would give almost any sum to fathom the secret ; to revert, however, to the harem at Wilsdown, I will send a faithful embassy to collect evidence, and do not doubt of ultimate success, meanwhile my name must not on any account appear in any of the proceedings.”

“ For what reason ?”

“ Because Lord Wilsdown is as vindictive as he is unscrupulous, and would not fail to contrive against me some serious injury.”

“ Well, be that as you like, we are much obliged to you for your information.”

“ I hope soon to obtain more. Good morning.”

And Mr. Monville departed.

CHAPTER XIV.**THE PRISONER.**

THE sunset dyed the distant hills with golden radiance, light purple clouds edged with celestial brightness, like fair Utopias of the sky, swam gently across the blue expanse of the firmament, the trees waved gently, whispering in the breeze, and the murmur of distant fountains fell cool upon the ear, as Mesmer reclined upon the grassy slope, descending from

the terrace at Wilsdown—that terrace, upon which so recently, in all her innocence of girlish love, Augusta had leant upon his arm, and dreamed with fond enthusiasm of bliss, ceaseless and unchanging.

Surrounded by flowers, whose perfume filled the air, Lord Wilsdown struck occasional chords upon a beautiful guitar, inlaid with silver and mother of pearl, the soft clear notes of which, under his masterly touch, vibrated with all the vigour of the finest harp. A Greek cap, of scarlet cloth, confined his dark brown curls; with the exception of his coat, he was entirely habited in white, and his open collar, and embroidered Turkish slippers, gave to his *tout en semble* an appearance at once *negligé* and picturesque. To a melody of the most varied beauty, now deeply pathetic, now thrilling with wild emotion, he sang the following improvisation---

“The spirit of my hero sire---came whispering in the mighty wind---awake, arise, be bold,

be great---mighty gifts from these lurk in the womb of time !”

“With soul of flame and tiger heart—I left the scrolls of bye-gone days, the wisdom of old, and the lore of my age, farewell ye silent comrades, lone friends of my unfriended youth !

“I went forth to the haunts of men—the magnates of the land before my spirit bowed—deluded fools ! with secret scorn I viewed their gestures vain.—I made my will my God.—I wished and I obtained !

“Who came to the lone student, to offer him aid on the road to fame, who cared if he lived, or died, consumed by his own genius !

“I plunged in crime, until the fiends, if such there were, had felt a pride in my companionship ; no idle scruples, childish doubts, no villany by halves, or pangs of vain remorse, restrained my upward flight, as eagle-like I soared !

“Robber, and saint alike, I robbed; guilty and innocent alike destroyed—warriors have conquered nations, but I have conquered souls,—if I have waded on through mingled streams of blood, and tears, they found in seas of briny gore, a grave—and deathless glory !

“ And even *I* have dreamed of better things, of bright philanthropy, and self sacrifice, of virtue pure, and boundless charity, of happiness and never fading love !

“ And shall I then repent?—ha—ha ! repent ! will the waves render up their dead, the earth restore its skeletons ?

“ Amid the worshippers of dross, of foul self-interest, ill understood, I dwell, and see them daily immolate their fellows on the wretched shrine of their poor egotism.

“ And I, if for my pleasure I have whirled a few of these poor knaves to swift destruction, it is that, in my eyes, they are not worthy to live the life, they know not to enjoy.

“O, life ! with all the sufferings, pains, monsters, meannesses, that dwell with men, how beautiful art thou, how full of keen delights !

“How glorious is nature ! even to gaze whilst thus reclining on yon azure dome, gives strange, mysterious pleasure, these flowery scents, this soft green turf, yon placid lake, in which the sunset mirrors the waving trees beyond, all calm the soul with deep voluptuous tranquillity.

“And why was not I — why are not all men born to this — why should toil, want, temptation, pain, exist, with deeds forbidden, and corroding care ? Why not have made all things bright, beautiful and happy, why not have gifted man with health and life, and beauty never fading, with sense of pleasure inexhaustible ?”

Propound these queries to the orthodox, and what have they to offer in reply ? They tell you 'tis presumption to enquire — all for the best — beyond man's comprehension — they call it impious for finite beings to judge the infinite,

and prate whole volumes of antiquated cant and bedlam reasonings! as if Omnipotence feared human scrutiny.

“ Well,” continued Biron, who had, for some time ceased to agitate the strings of his guitar, “ I am, at any rate, wiser than Socrates; he knew that he could know nothing, I know that I can *feel* much, life is worth enjoying after all!

“ But O, woman, woman! why does possession bring indifference? why is the passionate longings of the soul ever unappeased? why this eternal thirst for pleasures still more keen, sensations still more rapturous?

“ Why Augusta, lovely as thou wert, and art, could not my love survive one brief and fleeting year?—alas! it is that for me there is no dwelling in the hearts of my race, no sympathy with the beings on which I prey; I share not their belief, their cares, their prejudices; no matter whether in the crowded ball room or the nightly forest, even alone the restless spirit

works within itself, victim of a consuming and eternal egotism !

For some time Mesmer remained absorbed in dark meditations, his eyes fixed vacantly upon the blue hills in the distance. A light step roused him from his dismal reveries, in which indeed he was not often disposed to indulge, nor were his fits of melancholy even of prolonged duration, for reversing the saying of the Roman, he considered 'to be miserable weak,' and like adjutant Green, 'acted accordingly.'

"You look dull, mi lord, what you call mopish—down in de mouse?" said a voice in soft Italian accents, and a slight graceful figure appeared on the terrace, whose fresh and youthfully voluptuous proportions were well displayed by a bodice laced down the front, in most bewitching style, as though the rounded charms, thereby concealed, longed to burst forth from their black satin thralldom, and skirts of white muslin, so spiritual and cloud-

like that the fairy outline of her shape shone through them like some operatic dream, or one of Plato's shadowy reminiscences of ante-natal life, when like a cork upon the sea, our souls bobbed up and down in azure waves, catching occasional glimpses of—God knows what—but something nice of course—heaven, the true, the beautiful and other ideal matters; but I write at random, my bad memory does not permit me to particularize, and I have lent my copy of the dialogues to a friend.

En passant as I have alluded to the great Academician, I cannot refrain from hinting to such of my readers, as are of a literary and philosophical turn, how great a service they would render to the English reading world, by the production of a complete and readable translation of all Plato's works. The uncouth and literal one by Taylor, however ill adapted to general perusal, would greatly lighten the labour. We read and hear constant complaints that people quote, and talk of Socrates's illus-

trious pupil, without having read even one syllable of his work, and this is easily accounted for by the fact that not one man in a hundred who goes to Oxford or Cambridge, and is presumed to be a good classical scholar, can manage Plato, in the original language, with even moderate facility, and heaven knows that metaphysical and ethical subjects require no additional obstructions to their comprehension. Reading, lexicon in hand, tries the patience of the most ardent neophyte—besides there are the ladies, who, more especially require a correct definition of the so much talked of, scoffed at, and misrepresented Platonic love. It is no use asking the pedants, they can read Greek it is true, but they cannot understand Plato. One thing is clear, that the philosopher meant to describe friendship in its purest and most elevating form, nor, in my humble opinion, is this by any means incompatible with the tender passions; however, time and space will not admit of a prolonged discussion upon the

subject in this volume. Meanwhile my fair friend Superficia, thou who hast quoted the unseen and discoursed of the unknown, permit me to refer you to Shelley's essays as a prescription for your disease, and if you *should* know any young gentleman addicted to dragging the Grecian sage his arguments, like Faust and Mephistopheles, when swearing to the decease of Martha's husband, '*ohne viel zu wissen*,' recommend him a *second* perusal of 'The Gorgias.'

To return to the young lady on the terrace, La Signora Neldoni, for she it was, was a charming brunette of one or two and twenty springs, with the dark hair and large black melting eyes of her country, and a skin of that clear brown tint, which Prince Puckler Muscan,* no mean judge of beauty, candidly prefers to the pale loveliness of more northern climes;

* See his Egypt and Mehemet Ali.

and I must confess I am inclined to agree with his highness's taste, though of course his purchase of the pretty Abyssinian as a companion in his tour up the Nile, is perfectly shocking to our English notions of propriety, and that careful regard for *appearances* (*c'est tout*) universally evinced by our proverbially moral nation.

No, I do not hesitate to assert that if—supposing that such an improbable thing *could* take place—if Lord So-and-so *had* bought a pretty slave *pour passer le tems*, during an Egyptian excursion, up the river, of unknown sources, he would never—no never have said anything about it in his journal!

“Giulietta!” exclaimed the Count—we still call him so from habit—“stay where you are, and I will sing you a serenade.”

So saying Biron sprang to his feet, and at once shaking off the black vapours which had clustered round his brain, sang with a clear

melodious voice, and 'a laughing devil in his eye,' an air from the opera of "*Roméo é Giulietta*," in a way that on the stage, if people of fashion had any nature left in them, would have brought down thunders of applause.

Talk of music having charms to soothe a *savage* breast---of course it has, who should be more susceptible of the pure sense of the beautiful, than an uncivilized cannibal---but let it soothe a dandy's self importance, behold a starched and lorgnette wearing coxcomb, gradually relaxing into an attitude bordering upon the graceful, the vulgarity of the artificial imperceptibly, verging into the dignified simplicity of the natural---*that* is the real triumph of music!

Throwing aside his guitar, and shaking back the long hair which fell so picturesquely beneath his cap of scarlet, Mesmer threw his arm round the waist of Giulietta, and before she was aware of his object, was whirling her along in a *valse du diable* down the lawn, lifting

at every turn her slight and gracile figure completely from the ground, until panting and half frightened she found herself on the margin of the lake, with Lord Wilsdown by her side, pale and placid as ever, and not in the least out of breath from the violence of the exertion, which, on the freak of the moment, he had undertaken.

“Well, carissima, I flatter myself that the opera itself never witnessed any thing like that!”

“Ah! you so frighten me!”

“Did I my pretty little gazelle?—yes, your heart beats terribly, Giulietta!”

“It beats for you!”

“Will it always do so?”

“Always—until death!”

“Yet you have loved before?”

“Never as I love you!”

“If we were to part—you would forget me?”

“Part!—no, no, I should die—but you will

never send me away—no, promise me that we shall never part ?”

“ But supposing I were ruined ?”

“ I would share your poverty with joy.”

“ And if I were a criminal, a robber, a murderer ?”

“ Ah ! dearest you jest.”

“ No, but supposing I were all that I have mentioned, and worse, would you shrink in horror from my touch—would you desert me ?”

“ I would follow you to the end of the world.”

“ And if such things existed, and I were a vampire—an evil spirit in human form, luring you to eternal destruction ?”

For a moment the Italian hesitated ; the strange tone of glowing irony in which Mesmer spoke, the bright, scorching glance he riveted upon her countenance, startled the deeply religious feelings with which she was imbued--but passion triumphed over super-

stition, and burying her face upon his bosom, she murmured—

“ Man or fiend—thine--thine---for ever !”

Wonderful at times was the mysterious mood with which the impostor was seized, when carried away by his wild and restless imagination, strange and awful the words to which he gave utterance ; weaker natures felt imposed on by a dread, yet resistless influence, and the most grotesque fantasies overshadowed the mind of the listener, like dim and fearful visions of another world.

Even the partakers of his pleasures, his most constant guests, the sharer, for the time, of his most passionate caresses, occasionally felt themselves separated from him by a gulf dark, broad, and impassable as the gloomy waters of Coccytus ; felt that whilst apparently admitting them to his confidence, there yet remained recesses in his memory and thought to which admission was for ever denied.

Loving the Lord of Wilsdown as Giuletta

did, with all the fiery intensity of a daughter of the sunny south, she could not help feeling a sensation of awe for her magnificent lover, and this sensation was the more powerful in his absence than when he was actually by her side. But with Mesmer familiarity might breed love the most ardent, the most devoted friendship, the intensest fear, the most burning hatred ; but never contempt. To have met his eye and said " I despise this man," would have been an impossibility, or a senseless mockery of words. Even acquainted as we are, with all the secrets of his life, we can scarcely refrain from an abhorrent admiration, a shuddering respect for the sublime perfection of his villany and the grandeur of his hypocrisy.

True, a pickpocket displays equal courage ; a housebreaker runs still greater risk, and for them we have ordinarily but pity and contempt. But our hero, bad as he is, could, under no circumstances, have become either

pickpocket or housebreaker ; nothing but the immensity of the stakes he played for, and which none but an intellect of the highest order could have aspired to, allured him to the impolitic path of crime, and the ultra dangerous attempt of baffling, by individual talent, the sacred and deeply rooted principles implanted in the social nature of the many.

Conversing gaily upon various topics, Biron and Giulietta now rambled on by the side of the lake, through flourishing orchards and flowery meadows, when the former paused and fixed his eyes in a scrutinising manner upon a bush a little way in advance of them.

“ What is it ? ” said the signora.

“ Hush ! most likely some sleeping trespasser, or perhaps poacher ; we will surprise him ; whilst I tie his arms, do you bind his feet together as firmly as you can with this handkerchief ; it will be amusing to see his consternation on awaking. ”

So saying, Mesmer advanced upon tiptoe

towards the supposed poacher, followed by Giuletta, who looked upon the whole matter as an excellent joke.

On reaching the bush, they found a man of truly Herculean proportions, wrapped in a large, thick cloak, and extended upon the ground at full length, in most profound slumber, as his loud snoring plainly evinced.

“Now, then,” said Mesmer, who had taken off the scarf he wore round his neck, “make a slip knot in the handkerchief and draw it tight the moment I place my knee upon his breast.”

Giuletta timidly obeyed, and in another instant the presumed poacher was tied hand and foot and gagged by our adventurer, with little consideration for his feelings, by a clod of turf, which effectually prevented all outcry.

“Send Sago to me directly,” said Mesmer to the Neapolitan, who immediately set off in the direction of the house.

Seeing that his prisoner was unable to res-

pire, and in danger of suffocation, Biron then reluctantly removed the clod of turf from his throat, although he still kept his knee upon the chest of the presumed poacher, who, wrapt as it were in a shroud by his heavy cloak, struggled in vain with the most desperate violence.

“ Mercy !” gasped the man, “ mercy my lord, and I will confess all.”

“ It is needless,” replied Mesmer, “ I know you already.”

“ You know me ?”

“ Yes, we have met before, you would have robbed and murdered me some months ago near Primrose Hill.”

“ But how, in the devil’s name ?” began Valence, for he it was, whom Monville had employed to play the spy upon the proceedings at Wilsdown, and who having lurked about the grounds and castle during the greater part of the previous night, in order to reconnoitre the *terrain*, had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue and exhaustion.

“ You would ask how I am enabled to recognise you, since the evening in question was of an almost pitchy darkness? In the first place some men have peculiar eyes—mine are like the tiger’s, I see better in the night than in the day-time, secondly, I have a singularly acute memory for voices, and yours is one not easily mistaken.”

“ I do not understand a word you say,” said Valence, doggedly, recovering from the effects of his first surprise, and that confusion of ideas generally prevalent in the brain of a man suddenly awakened by the insertion of a clod of turf between his teeth, “ I never saw you before, and what you mean by this treatment I cannot imagine,” continued the highwayman reflecting with some degree of satisfaction that his hair and whiskers were dyed, and his face stained, circumstances calculated at any rate to disguise his identity.

“ You talk absurdly,” said Mesmer, with

great coolness, "and had better at once confess your object in coming down here, or I shall consider it my duty to deliver you up to justice, but make a full confession, and I pledge you my honor, that I will neither inform against your past or present misdeeds."

The agent of Monville, for a moment, saw that his only chance was in the generosity of the young nobleman. Notwithstanding their being exercised against himself, Biron's courage and address had a sort of charm for the rough soul of Valence. Not that the latter would have refrained from revenging himself upon our hero to the utmost, had a fitting opportunity appeared, but he could not help attributing to the count a chivalrous sort of character, to which impression Mesmer's frank tone and aspect not a little conduced, and besides, felt a natural antipathy to the shuffling vindictive attorney, who employed him.

In short, yielding to circumstances, the

robber—spy confessed without circumlocution, (for he had not brains enough to invent or prevaricate with any degree of plausibility, especially beneath the scrutinising gaze of his wily conqueror,) the whole object of his visit to Wilsdown, which simply consisted in obtaining surreptitiously every information relative to its lordly owner and his doings. Valence however omitted all mention of a private plan he had formed, of breaking into the castle with three of his associates who were lurking about the neighbourhood, and committing, the very next night, a most daring burglary, on which occasion he had fondly purposed, penetrating to the very bed-room of the Count, and inflicting upon him a retaliatory horsewhipping, in return for that so energetically administered to his own carcase by our adventurer, at their former rencontre. The finger of providence, however, defeated his designs, as we have seen, by pointing out his sleeping form to his enemy. Too late, Valence perceived that the bold wickedness of a burglar,

and the brutal audacity of a highwayman, by no means rendered a man capable of sustaining the far more arduous and diplomatic character of a spy, and an eavesdropper.

How often do we find in more respectable spheres, parallel instances of people, who, from a false appreciation of their own powers and talents, though eminently successful in one position are utterly unfitted for another. Thus many a man, who, in a subordinate office, exerts a most useful and beneficial influence, as first lord of the treasury would play the very devil with a nation's prosperity; a most acute barrister may make a very inferior judge, an admirable general commit the most unheard of blunders as a statesman; a money-making shopkeeper be swamped at his first dive into the sea of grander mercantile speculation; a cook of the most exalted genius, when wedded to her master, become an absolute disgrace to the withdrawing room! Thorny are the paths of ambition, even to the least of her worshippers. The steps in the

Counts de Biron in the feudal, or as I have, in a former novel, explained—"few'd all" ages.

"Make yourself at home," said Mesmer politely. "Sago, see that my worthy guest has a loaf of the best bread, and a pitcher of the freshest spring water regularly every morning, and let him have a truss of straw and a towel. I wish to combine nutritious food, with cleanliness, comfort, and simplicity."

A horrible groan reverberated through the vault as the trap door, forming its only entrance, was slammed to, and fastened with an enormous padlock.

"So much for business," quoth Lord Wilsdown, gaily, "and now for supper. Sago, my hookah!"

"I am curious to know the ultimate result of these proceedings," muttered Sago, monologically, "I improve in a pecuniary point of view, but the tranquillity of my slumbers, is by no means on the increase. My noble master says conscience is a bug-bear—mine

bites and hugs me most uncommonly, I hope, at any rate, that his lordship will keep on the right side of the law as far as possible, or by the——”

“ Sago! why the devil don't you bring me my pipe ?”

CHAPTER XV.

THE HAREM—THE UNEXPECTED GUEST.

SARDANAPALUS himself, the Assyrian voluptuary, last of the giant hunter's kingly line, could not have desired a hall more gorgeous for his revels than that now entered by Mesmer.

On either side rose seven marble columns, white as the driven snow, between which stood twice seven alabaster statues, copies of the most renowned and ideal creations of the

classical and modern chisel, on pedestals of polished porphyry, curtains of crimson satin hung behind them, reflecting lifelike hues, from countless lamps, the dazzling brilliance whereof was softly tempered by ground glass globes, thus giving them, suspended as they were from golden wires of inconceivable tenuity, the appearance of floating spheres of glowing silver. At either end of the saloon were archways wreathed with flowers and evergreens, in which were fitted mirrors of gigantic proportions, reaching completely to the ground, and artfully contrived to convey the idea of an interminable series of equally splendid apartments. At the base of every statue, and on either side of the archways reclined lions of *verde nutico*, and in the centre of the hall was a large table of oval shape, covered with every conceivable delicacy, and the rarest wines in coolers of frosted silver elaborately carved, whilst Grecian vases of the most beautiful shapes, contained the choicest

and most odoriferous flowers, and relays of ices of peach and nectarine rose continually from below upon a smaller spiral table in the centre.

The floor of this magnificent hall was inlaid with the most cunning devices, in various coloured woods, and in the centre was covered by the skins of bears and tigers.

Around the table were couches, sofas, and ottomans of the most luxurious and inviting aspect, gazing upon which fatigue and weariness fled howling away, whilst subdued though powerful tones of celestial music swelled upon the air from some invisible source, and harmonised the soul to pleasing and poetical thoughts without interrupting or disturbing the course of lively conversation—

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and clime, and root,
In an exotic garden, sometimes found,
With cost, and care, and warmth, induced to shoot,
One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping—

Sipped, wide awake, the rosy-lipped champagne! forgive me noble ghost—departed Byron—let the ‘hero worship’ with which my soul hath drank so deeply for your greatness, be my excuse for thus adapting to somewhat different circumstances, the lines of beauty I have dared to quote.

In graceful attitudes and costumes of infinite tastefulness, reclined upon each couch a lovely girl engaged in laughing converse, or the more material, though not less evanescent discussion of the delicacies upon the table, whilst the Lord of Wilsdown himself, seated by the side of Giulietta, drank from a beaker of rock crystal set in burnished gold, draught upon draught, of potent Johannisberg, till even *his* cheeks became faintly flushed, and seizing his guitar, he poured forth an impassioned melody, whilst his eyes darted like lightning from beauty to beauty, till they finally rested upon the last, and favorite of his additions to his harem—Giulietta.

He had indeed collected a most superb seraglio, and what was still more ingenious, contrived to keep his odalisks in perfect order; and by innumerable devices to avert that terrible disease—*ennui*; generally so fatal to the peace of such establishments.

But Mesmer passed much of his time in instructing his fair mistresses in the wiles and sophistries of the insidious system, miscalled Epicureanism, which he had himself adopted, and as day after day passed in pic-nics, rides, billiards, music, feasting, and dancing, moreover as opium was, without their knowledge, artfully mingled in the wine they drank, the poor deluded victims of his insatiable lust, who had been, one by one, seduced from the ways of innocence and virtue by the wiles of the unwearied sensualist, lived in a sort of dreaming excitement, and fancied themselves in a manner transported to another world, of which Mesmer was at once the presiding spirit, the monarch, and the creator.

“ More champagne !” exclaimed Biron, “ and a dance ! ho ladies fair, a dance !”

The girls started from their couches as if by magnetic sympathy (which was in fact the case) at his words, and the young Lord having stamped thrice upon the ground the invisible music commenced a series of rapid waltzes. Round and round the hall they whirled till they resembled a nunnery of dancing dervishes, if such a poetic fiction may be allowed as a simile. Never, perhaps, before were collected such a galaxy of loveliness of form and feature united to such picturesque costumes, and graceful movements, as upon this occasion. Mesmer himself seized a bottle of imperial Tokay, and half emptying it into a silver flagon raised it to his moustachied lips with a triumphant glance at the maddening gyrations of the beings he had lured to an abyss from which the egress was beset with insurmountable difficulties. Wildly his large dark eyes imbibed

the various charms that gleamed by turns upon his soul, and exclaimed exultingly as he tossed off the golden draught he held in his hand—
“Is not such an existence worthy of the wise? is it not godlike to enjoy as I do?—virtue—propriety—devotion! ha! ha! ha! what vain and puerile delusions! What profit they to the ascetic who, after plaguing himself with their conservation through three score years, finds himself the tenant of a damp unwholesome coffin—yet if there be a world beyond the grave?—Then welcome when it comes!—progression seems the principle of nature, perhaps five more senses may be added to our means of enjoyment!—Pshaw! away with metaphysics, they but lead to vague and ugly thickets of the thoughts in which refreshing fruits are vainly sought! I’ll none of them—Giulietta here is to your beauty!

And Mesmer emptied the remainder of the Tokay into his goblet, and was about to raise

it to his lips, when a sudden rustling behind one of the curtains, forcibly arrested his attention.

“Somebody is entering by the window!” exclaimed Giulietta.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Theodosia, “if it were robbers!

“How terrible!” exclaimed Rosalind.

“How mysterious!” muttered Cecilia.

“Who is there?” said Lord Wilsdown, loudly, advancing angrily towards the window, whence the noise proceeded. “Some insolent lackey playing the spy I suppose!” he muttered grimly. “I’ll teach the varlet to make his master turn comedian for his amusement.”

Could it be possible that Valence’s accomplices had resolved to attack the castle?—but no, the idea seemed preposterous, they could never venture upon such unheard of audacity.

Mesmer approached the window, when the curtains were thrown violently aside, and a

figure, whose aspect struck terror into the hearts of the women, bounded into the room with a maniac yell, that caused even our hero's blood to run cold for a moment, and that of the girls to congeal in their veins with horror.

“Guy Merlmore !” exclaimed Mesmer, staggering back some paces from this unexpected apparition.

The madman, for he it was, who had again, with surprising ingenuity, effected his escape, and either by chance, or instinct, found his way to Wilsdown, replied to the peer's exclamation by a second yell, little inferior to the first in harshness and duration, and glared upon the impostor with a strange mixture of insane ferocity, and conscious recognition.

His dress consisted of a cloak, lined with scarlet cloth, which he wore inside out, and a military foraging cap, whilst his nether man was habited in tight elastic drawers and boots, the former being sustained by a silk handker-

chief tied about his waist ; with the exception of his shirt, we have enumerated every garment worn by him. In his hand he held a gardener's spade from which drops of blood were trickling, to increase the alarm of the female spectators, on his entrance.

"Well how are you Mr. Guy ? said Mesmer with assumed *sang froid*, I am happy to see you—take care, don't spoil the marble floor with that clumsy spade of yours."

"*That* dog will never wag his tail again ?" said Guy Merlmore, with a hoarse laugh.

"No ? well I am glad to hear it, but you must be tired, sit down and take some supper."

"Well, if it is not poisoned, I will."

Mesmer made signs to the ladies of his seraglio to leave them alone, and Giulietta giving him a significant nod, glided away with the rest, whilst the madman threw himself upon a sofa, laying his formidable weapon by his side, and began to eat with the air of a starved wolf, in winter, in a Polish forest.

“And now my friend,” said Lord Wiledown, “tell me how you managed to escape from those rascally jailors of yours?”

“Why the fact is,” said the lunatic, confidentially, first looking in all directions to make sure that he was not over-heard—the fact is I caught a flash of forked lightning in the garden, and harnessed it to a cloud that was just passing—you see the advantages of the plan?”

“Clearly,” replied Mesmer gravely.

“Well, away I went at a gradient of a million degrees, and after passing Kamschatka, and Kensington gardens, I found myself near this castle, and having blown out the brains of some lion or tiger, in the court yard, managed to climb in at the window as you see—ha, ha, ha, ha!”

“Ha, ha, ha! capital!” said Mesmer, with affected sympathy. “You know where you are now, I suppose?”

“Of course I do---in the palace of the magician Fracabas.”

“You are right.”

“And you are Fracabas?”

“I am.”

“Then the hour has arrived!” shouted Guy Merlmore with maniacal exultation.

At this moment a brace of pistols rose through the trap door in the centre of the table to which we have already alluded.

“Silly girl,” muttered Mesmer, “she will spoil all.” Luckily the madman did not perceive this phenomenon, or his suspicions might have been aroused, and he have either been seized by one of his violent fits, during which he destroyed everything around him, or he might have again effected his escape, which was an event that by no means coincided with the rapidly formed schemes of our hero.

“Tell me now,” said the madman earnestly, “since you are the magician Fracabas, where I

can find my mutual enemy, Cashall, the merchant, who robbed me of my property by his rascality, and with the assistance of one Monville, a vile pettifogger of an attorney, reduced me to beggary by a forged deed—I see the whole trick clearer than ever—where, where, can I find these wretches — speak and—ha, ha, ha! I will give you land, in the moon and the dog star!

“Cashall,” said Biron solemnly “*is dead!*”

“*Dead?* and I not there to see him die! Oh hell! and Monville?”

“Lives—but I will take you to him——”

“When?” shrieked the madman, starting up and rolling his eyes with indescribable ferocity.”

“Soon,” said Biron.

“But when, to night?”

“Impossible!”

“To-morrow?”

“The moment I can discover his retreat.”

"It is well, Count de Biron," said the lunatic, suddenly, to our adventurer's astonishment, assuming the air of a perfectly sane man, and addressing him by his real name, "you are the best friend I ever had, and stay---I will tell you all---all---But let me think." Guy pressed his hand to his forehead for a few minutes, and then resumed very rapidly, as if fearing that he should not have time to complete his narration---You think perhaps I cared for the loss of fortune---you think that it was gold alone I lost---how you are mistaken! I had debts of honor which to this day remain unpaid, I had---the madman's voice grew hollow and spectral as he uttered these words---"I had a mistress more beautiful than an angel---I could not wed her to beggary---If you had but seen ---" at this crisis the madman again started up, and roared like an infuriate wild beast, with two bounds he was at the door, and rushed along a passage. Mesmer followed him, but could never have succeeded in over-

taking him, had not the maniac found himself opposite a dead wall at the termination of the corridor, and being thus compelled to retrace his steps, was met by Biron, who felled him to the ground by one dexterous blow, and did not leave him until he had seen him confined in a sort of extemporaneous straight-jacket, and safely lodged in a secure, though commodious apartment.

“I think,” murmured Sago as he received his master’s directions, concerning this last arrival, “I think this castle is getting to be a sort of cross between a ——— and a bastille. ‘Self preservation is the first law of nature’—this cannot last long—I must take care of the holy unity—number one, vulgar people would say—

Ex uno disce omnes.

Meanwhile the madman paraded solemnly, with arms behind him, and eyes riveted upon

his boots and white cotton continuations, imagining himself Napoleon, and firmly persuaded that he had just effected his escape from the Island of Elba, to become the prisoner of generous England, the victim of their *low* persecutions at St. Helena.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COURT OF JUSTICE.

LORD WILSDWON was both shocked and surprised, on returning to town, at being politely arrested by an officer with a warrant, and taken before a magistrate to defend himself against an accusation of the most serious character.

Friskerton happening to be with our adventurer at the time, immediately volunteered to accompany him to the police court, to which they accordingly proceeded in the carriage of

the former ; Biron professing great indignation at the circumstance, and indulging in sundry edifying hints as to the tranquillity of mind induced by a high degree of conscious innocence, and the calm determination to inflict upon his traducers the utmost rigour of the law. His companion was infinitely more enraged at the occurrence, and beguiled the way by a series of forcible and varied anathemas, ejaculated with all the energy of a four and twenty pounder or a fashionable sermon-thunderer of the Dr. Damnemall* category.

On approaching a police court, the observer is struck by a heterogeneous assemblage of pauper-like creatures of the most miserable aspect, policemen and shabby genteel blackguards in great variety. These people seem to have a pleasant, easy life of it, if one may judge by appearances; their chief occupation

* See 'The Bubble Family' by Lady Bulwer Lytton.

apparently consisting in lounging about the doorways and passages of the court, and standing as much as possible in the way of everybody desiring entrance to, or egress from these unworthy temples of Themis.

On penetrating to the interior where justice is done by the people, or rather, in many cases, to speak metaphorically the people are done by the justice, two figures at once most forcibly arrest your attention. They are—

Alpha.—The magistrate.

Beta.—The clerk.

Mr. Alpha the magistrate is a fat gentleman with rosy cheeks and a remarkably low forehead, he wears spectacles, and acts the farce assigned to him with admirable gravity and command of countenance.

Mr. B—— the clerk is thin in proportion, and bald headed altogether, to adopt an often used simile, very much like a partridge cane split half-way up, and dressed by a very bad tailor, in a threadbare suit of black, and a white

strangler, as poor Brummell's triumph of genius is now facetiously denominated.

These two humans—this is a word after my own heart, and supplies the want in our language of a fair equivalent to the German *Mench*, superbly—these two humans, I repeat, serve out penalties to the guilty, and decide differences and difficulties; with a promptness and *sang froid*, that would occasionally astonish the Lord Chancellor. Not but that they have their nice points and legal quibbles too, now and then, as will be seen hereafter.

On the excellent division—of—labor, principle, the great Alpha does the dignity, and the Beta the working moiety of the business. That is to say, Alpha sits at a large desk in a comfortable arm-chair, pokes the fire, reads the newspaper, and brow-beats accusers. Beta fidgets on a high stool at a diminutive table, listens to the witnesses, and cross examines them with all the *polished urbanity* of—a leading barrister, if not with equal acuteness.

Just as our adventurer reached the penetralia of the court, the night causes, as they are termed were being dispatched, and a man of most ruffianly aspect at the bar, was charged with stealing sundry bottles of porter from the yard of a certain public house. At first sight, the case appeared simple enough; the evidence was clear, and there seemed little to trouble the muddled brains of the magistrate in his decision, when lo! a sudden and appalling difficulty arose—it appeared that the porter and the bottles belonged to the landlord of the gin shop, and the refreshing beverage in their interior, pertained to his pot boys; though how it became the latter's, we do not remember. Hence arose the question—a question far too important we are persuaded to excite the risibility of the acute and nicely discriminating readers—ought there to be two separate indictments, the one for the porter and the other for the bottles, or might both be included under one and the same indictment? Woefully were the learned

Dogberry and his thin satellites puzzled. For full an hour they discussed this deeply interesting point, they consulted every book in their library from the first volume of the statutes at large to Johnson's dictionary inclusive, and finally—deferred the question for future consideration.

Wisdom, saith Solomon, is known of her children.—Assuredly if our magistrates were ever children of that august lady—their own mother would scarcely recognize them in their days of maturity!

A broker here came to swear an affidavit, as to deserted premises, with a view to obtain possession of a house, by a summary ejectment, of the refractory tenant. The clerk read it over very slowly to the evident annoyance of the swearer, who was in a hurry.

“Sir,” said the clerk solemnly, “you talk here of a three stalled stable?”

“Yes, it is in the description of the premises, pray do not detain me,” said the other.

"Three stalled," said the thin clerk, "is not grammar."

"Then what the devil is?" quoth the broker impatiently.

"Three *stall*, is the correct term, sir, three stall stable, and I shall take the liberty of altering the mistake."

"Alter what you please," retorted the broker contemptuously, "only let me go about my business."

"Take care what you are saying, sir, or I will not do it at all; do you know who I am, sir?"

"Yes," said the other, who seemed a sensible, straightforward man, "the servant of the public though you fancy yourself entitled to insult them. Three stalled is right; and if you have a Johnson you may satisfy yourself in a moment."

"Then, get down Johnson!" said the clerk in a passion.

One of the nondescript loungers about the

court, before alluded to, hastened to bring the desired volume from the book case.

"Now, sir," said the thin clerk triumphantly.

"Well, *now*, sir?" replied the broker, pointing with his finger to the word, "you perceive that you are wrong after all?"

The opinionated clerk gave a suppressed howl of vexation, muttered something about old edition, impertinence, &c., and proceeded to *alter* the affidavit on his own grammatical authority, in defiance of Johnson and the broker to boot.

"Well," said the latter, with an undisguised grin, "I must take care that the mistake is *jore-stalled* the next time."

"Sir," said the clerk angrily, puns are out of place in a court of justice.

"I wish punching heads were not," muttered the broker as he departed, "I should like to smash that fellow's empty nutshell for him,

taking up one's time with his foolery, and to-day, quarter day too!"

The magistrate who had been out to refresh himself, re-entered the court at this crisis, and the night causes were resumed.

The next criminal on the list was a little boy of about eleven years of age, accused of the heinous wickedness of carrying, on the previous evening, a very suspicious looking piece of bacon, of which he gave a very insufficient account, according to the policeman's evidence, who feeling cold, and wishing to warm himself at the station-house fire, had adopted the usual expedient in such cases, of arresting the first manageable person he could lay hands on.

"Where did you get the bacon, eh?" said the magistrate sternly, "and where were you taking it?"

"A man gave it me, to carry to No. —, Holborn."

"Who was the man?"

"I don't know."

“ You don’t know, eh? you little rascal—policeman produce the bacon.”

“ Here it is your worship.”

“ Is it fat or lean?”

“ I should call it streaky, your worship.”

“ Well I suppose I must remand you until the owner of the bacon appears.”

“ You had better send him to the tread-mill for a week at once,” humanely suggested the clerk.

“ Perhaps it would be as well,” and the boy was taken crying from the court.

“ Is he an old offender?” said Dogberry.

“ Never saw him here before, your worship.”

“ Call on the next.”

This time a most extraordinary figure made its appearance at the bar.

“ An Ojybbeway Indian, by Jove!” exclaimed Friskerton, who had hitherto sucked the knob of his ebony walking cane in profound silence.

“ This woman, please your worship”—began a policeman.

“Woman!” said the magistrate, “you do not mean to say it is a *woman*?”

“It certainly does not look much like one?” said the clerk with a grin.

The poor creature presented indeed a most epicene aspect. A dirty cotton handkerchief of that dusty brownish indescribable color peculiar to the garments of the poor in this country, was twisted round her head like a turban, completely concealing her hair, and harmonizing wonderfully with the hue of her bony features, on which a beard and a moustache appeared, that would not have disgraced a cornet in the guards; a ragged cloak was her only garment, and it appeared that she had been taken up the preceding night walking about in a state of total nudity, having pawned all her clothes in order to procure gin for her husband, who had been run over by a cab, the day previous.

Such horrors appeared almost incredible, yet they are facts. It is also a fact that the poor

wretch above described, was, after being reprimanded by the magistrate, dismissed without any assistance being afforded her. Surely under such circumstances, a little more active humanity should be adopted.

It may be conceived that Lord Wilsdown took little interest in the proceedings we have described, whatever amusement they might at another time have afforded. Though not betraying any external symptoms of uneasiness, it required all the firmness he could command to refrain from signs of impatience, and apprehension. Again and again he reviewed the history of his misdeeds, and again, and again repeated to himself the impossibility of any tangible proof appearing against him. All those whose words could injure his fame, were bound by the strongest ties of self interest to remain silent, and in his worst iniquities he was himself his only confidant, still some unforeseen casualty might have occurred—
“But it can be nothing serious,” thought Mes-

mer—"yet—if it should be—I have lost the best opportunity of flight--and had I fled, it were a confession of my guilt. No, I must brave it out, at the worst I have my universal panacea, my *elixir mortis*, the sole medicine for curing every disease, moral and physical—the key to the world beyond, or eternal darkness and rest. Mesmer de Biron is not destined to be hooted by a mob, and destroyed by a hangman!"

They were now shown into a private room, and the magistrate opened the business by saying—

"My lord, there is a most serious accusation laid against you, which I trust you will be able to refute with little difficulty—My Lord, you are accused of--of--excuse my plainness," stammered the magistrate, who quailed beneath the indignant glance of scorn which Mesmer riveted upon him.

"Well sir, of what am I accused?" said Lord Wilsdown, sternly.

“Of murder !” said the magistrate---“of murdering Mr. Theodore Ramsay.”

“Mr. who ?”

“Theodore Ramsay !”

“Ah ! I remember, a young artist, he was about to paint something for me about a year ago, but took offence at some rather severe criticism I applied to his paintings, and went, if I remember rightly, to Paris.”

“Yes, my lord, as you say, he went to Paris, and has never been heard of since.”

“Indeed?---and pray what has all this to do with my murdering him? and who is the cowardly liar that dares to accuse me of so terrible a crime ?”

“Mr. Monville, a solicitor, with whom you were, I believe, acquainted.”

“Acquainted ?” said Biron, fiercely, “take care sir, what you say---my acquaintance does not lie amongst such *canaille*. I know this man to be a pettifogging rascal, who hates me with all the malignancy such things are capa-

ble of, because I would not allow myself to be cheated by him in some matters relating to the purchase of a house from one of his clients; however I am perfectly prepared to confront him, and to prosecute the scoundrel for perjury, as a matter of course. As for this accusation, I am at a loss to conceive what story he can possibly have invented to prove that I murdered a youth, I have not seen since a year ago, also, allow me to observe that the fact of a person being missing for twelve months, is by no means a satisfactory proof of his death, and I presume you will allow that a man must be dead, before he can be murdered?"

"Will your lordship have the kindness to read that paragraph," said the magistrate, handing to our hero a number of the *Constitutionnel* about a week old."

Mesmer took the paper, and read as follows.

The day before yesterday the remains of a human body were discovered by some fishermen in the Seine, at a short distance from Paris. It

had evidently, remained a considerable time in the water. The only token, giving any clue to the possible identity, is a small cornelian seal ring upon one of the fingers, upon which, the initials T. R., are engraved. The deceased must have been of moderate stature and slight figure, probably a young man under twenty years of age."

"And the identity is proved by the seal-ring?" said Lord Wilsdown, in a tone of sad interest, as if, for the moment, he forgot the *disagremens* of his own position, in his pity for the untimely fate of the young artist.

"Precisely so," replied the magistrate.

"Poor boy!" exclaimed Mesmer, "you remember," continued he, turning to Lord Friskerton, "my telling you how I saved him from starvation or suicide—and *I* should have murdered him!"

"We will now examine Mr. Monville, my lord," said the magistrate, "and your innocence

will, I trust, be soon satisfactorily established."

Monville, the attorney, was accordingly ushered in, accompanied, to Biron's ineffable astonishment, by his friend, Harry Scales, who was equally surprised at encountering our hero.

"Why, my lord, what brings you to this horrid place?" said the artist, shaking hands with Mesmer and Friskerton; nevertheless, with a dash of coldness towards the former, arising from his half belief, that the countess had been unjustly accused.

"The world is going mad, I think!" said Lord Friskerton, shrugging his shoulders.

"I am accused of murdering your young friend, Theodore Ramsay!" said Biron.

"*You*, my lord!" exclaimed Scales, starting back.

"Yes, I! of drowning him in the Seine, near Paris."

“ Good God ! what earthly grounds can there be for such a suspicion.”

“ None that I am aware of, but some base assertions of yonder trembling hound, who, at any rate, shall be punished for his villany, if there is such a thing as justice in England !”

“ He called on me, and asked me if I remembered a ring with initials upon it belonging to Ramsay. I did so perfectly, and came here to prove the identity, without knowing who was accused ; but let us hear what the wretch has to say.”

Monville, who studiously avoided meeting the eye of our adventurer, now commenced a clear and succinct narration of what he had witnessed at the Parisian gambling house, positively swearing that he had recognised Biron in the guise of the lucky stranger ; and asserting his belief, that the companion of the said stranger, was no other than the deceased Theodore Ramsay, who had been his accomplice in some

fraudulent scheme, and had been subsequently thrown into the Seine, to secure his silence and the count's safety. Monville farther stated that he could produce witnesses to prove that a person answering to the description of the mysterious gambler, had quitted the *Hotel du Diable Rue de —*, Paris, in company with a youth of the age, stature, and appearance of Theodore Ramsay. That this person called himself Richard Johnson, merchant, in his passport, and passed off his companion as his son, that he had left the hotel along with the latter, and the very same night quitted Paris *alone*, as was proved by the inspection of his passport on the road, that his supposed son had never returned to the hotel—although he had left a great coat there, which he would scarcely have neglected to call for. The great coat had, it moreover appeared, a letter addressed to T. Ramsay, Esq., in one of its pockets, and could, no doubt, be identified by some of his acquaintance. It could, moreover, be proved that the Count de Biron, now Lord Wilsdown,

was not in town at the time specified; and that the last place at which Ramsay had been seen or heard of, was at the house of his lordship.

“Were I to follow the natural bent of my inclination,” said Lord Wilsdown, in reply, with deliberate calmness; “I should at once declare my conviction that the whole deposition of this man, is one tissue of abominable falsehood, and quite on a par with other portions of his conduct, with which, as he is well aware, I am acquainted. To prove, however, the utter and hopeless absurdity of the infamous calumny he has had the insanity to advance against me. I shall, assuming all the facts he has stated to be perfectly capable of proof, briefly show, firstly, that they do not in the slightest degree, tend to sustain the charge he has made; secondly, in the simplest and most incontrovertible manner, I shall altogether refute the ridiculous accusation.”

“Your self-possession does your lordship credit,” said the magistrate, frowning severely at Monville, and already strongly prejudiced in favour of the wily peer, though an hour ago he had been more than half persuaded of his guilt.

“Excuse me however for taking up your time by first mentioning a fact or two relative to Mr. Monville, in order to account for his malignant feeling towards myself, and his capability of committing any crime, and of perjuring himself to any conceivable extent.”

“I do not see in what way these libellous assertions of his lordship concern the present charge,” said Monville, with irritation.

“No, truth is a libel,” said Mesmer, sarcastically, “but you can bring an action against me—and as by that time you will probably be a convict at the hulks, a jury would, doubtless, estimate the damages done, for injury to your character—very exorbitantly.”

"Mr. Monville, I must beg that you will not again interrupt his lordship in his defence," said the magistrate sourly. Lord Wilsdown continued.

"Some time ago I discovered traces of a most nefarious plot, contrived by the gentleman before you, and a certain Mr. Cashall, since deceased, by which a near connexion of mine, Mr. Guy Merlmore, was completely ruined, and still more dreadful to narrate, driven into a state of insanity, from which he has never since recovered. Though I have not yet been able to obtain sufficient legal evidence of this infamous transaction, I have no doubt that by persevering in my enquiries, I shall soon be enabled to do so. I am quite ready to enter into all the particulars if Mr. Monville desires it---"

The magistrate, who perceived that our hero's accuser became momentarily more agitated, and betrayed every symptom of guilt, whilst vainly striving to imitate Lord Wils-

down's composure, regarded him with increasing sternness, and said—"my lord, I fear this is a very bad business indeed, but will you have the kindness at once to refute the charge brought against you; what you have now stated, may be a matter for after consideration."

Monville began to feel excessively uncomfortable. His hatred and revengeful feelings towards Biron, had led him into the error of overrating, to an exaggerated extent, the weight of his own testimony, and the circumstantial evidence by which it was supported. He saw the slight effect his statement produced upon the magistrate, the utter immobility of Mesmer; he had exhausted his weightiest proofs, had reserved no striking argument, no overwhelming fact, to confound, and, as it were, crush the defence of his antagonist. The earth seemed to sink beneath his feet, and he glanced uneasily at the door with a vague notion that the outside of the court might prove more conducive to his personal safety than the interior.

He had, moreover, by mature reflection upon the extreme caution with which the fraud upon Guy Merlmore had been effected, convinced himself of the impossibility of Biron's actually professing the proofs he asserted, and was persuaded that all his knowledge upon the subject must have been derived from the ravings of the lunatic, and his own acute powers of deduction. But with the presence of the Count, all Monville's fears returned with redoubled strength, and he could have torn his hair with rage, at his own folly in commencing a fresh struggle with so remorseless and dangerous a foeman.

Recalling all his past experience of Mesmer de Biron's character, he felt a chill sensation of undescribable terror, gradually creeping, like a cold and slimy serpent over his frame, as the Count resumed his defence in the calm confident tone of one who rather condescends than at all deems it necessary to defend his character against a vile and slanderous accusation.

“Even presuming,” continued Lord Wilsdown, “that all Mr. Monville states is perfectly true, it must, nevertheless, at once, strike even the meanest capacity, the most obtuse observation that my identity with this lucky gambler, at Paris, is the only point that affects me personally, even in the slightest degree. That disproved, it is plain that the whole accusation at once falls to the ground.”

“Undoubtedly, nothing can be more palpably evident,” said the magistrate, nodding sagaciously, and wiping the mist off his spectacles, with his coat sleeve.

“I might enlarge,” resumed Biron, “on the almost absolute want of evidence on this point ; for the unsupported testimony of Mr. Monville, who has every reason to fear and hate me, can weigh but little in the matter ——”

“There were others present who might recognise you,” said the attorney, doggedly, “they may be sent for.”

“Scarcely,” said Mesmer, with unruffled

equanimity, "for, even by your own garbled statement, the man you wish to identify me with, was totally different in appearance, from myself, both as to age, figure, complexion, and even the color of his hair."

"He was evidently disguised, but the eyes, the height, the shape of the face, eyebrows, and moustache, were the same to a hair, none could mistake them," said Monville, desperately; becoming momentarily more and more uneasy, and almost doubting himself the fact he was so deeply interested in proving.

"Such similarities are to be met with hourly in every street in London," replied Mesmer, shrugging his shoulders.

"Certainly," said the magistrate, "we often mistake strangers for people we know—there is nothing in that at all."

"But could this person," continued Lord Wilsdown, "be proved to be a perfect facsimile of myself, the impossibility of any body being in two places at one and the same time,

would still remain as much an impossibility as ever. On the day this fellow swears to having seen me in Paris, I happened to be in Devonshire, and can produce a dozen witnesses, or twenty, if required, by tomorrow evening, to prove the fact.

“That is all that is requisite, my lord,” said the magistrate, with politeness, as a mere matter of form, I must give you into custody of the Black Rod, but I do not hesitate to say that I am as perfectly convinced of your innocence as of my own.”

“I thank you for your good opinion. said Lord Wilsdown, with haughty condescension, “but as I wish, no doubt, to remain upon the mind of any body present, as to the utter falsehood of the absurd charge made against me, I must briefly allude to one more trifling point—viz.: that Ramsay was last seen at my house. The fact is that I engaged him to copy some sketches of mine, but offended his vanity by some rather severe criticism upon

his painting, and he left my house, as my servants can testify, some days previous to my starting for Devonshire. I think he mentioned, before our disagreement, some intention of visiting Paris; however, I paid him well for his trouble, as my cheque book can be brought to prove, and since that time have neither seen or heard of him. Indeed if there is any truth in this Monville's narration, it seems more than probable that the unfortunate youth, who was, I understand, always wild and eccentric in his ways, has fallen a victim to some diabolical scheme. Though, I must, in justice, remark that whoever the mysterious gambler may have been, there does not appear a shadow of evidence that he was the murderer of the youth supposed to have been identical with Ramsay. Of his death I think there can be no doubt. But that is no affair of mine at present.

“ I shall, of course, the moment I am at liberty, prosecute Mr. Monville, for perjury, and renew my endeavours to expose his other

villanies, which have only been relaxed on account of my own unfortunate position with regard to Mr. Merlmore's family. But sir," added Mesmer, impressively, "where truth and justice are at stake I allow no selfish considerations to influence my conduct. At the same time I think it is your duty to arrest Mr. Monville, at once, or ——"

"By ——!" exclaimed the magistrate, "he is gone—after him directly—my lord, I sincerely regret the false and unjust position you have been placed in—is he anywhere about the court?—is he in the next room?"

"No, your worship," said a police officer, re-entering the room, "he has taken to his heels, but there are four of them after him, and the cry of stop thief has been raised already."

"My lord, after this we may dispense with the Black Rod," said the magistrate politely, "I hope no misplaced pity will induce you to spare the scoundrel when he is taken."

“ You may depend upon my prosecuting,” said Biron.

“ The rascal ought to be flogged through London !” said Friskerton indignantly.

“ I never before heard of such brazen audacity !” said Scales.

“ I think it was rather too bold an attempt,” said Mesmer, “ and were it not for the miserable death of this poor young Ramsay, I could laugh at the scamp’s effrontery.”

“ But do you think it really was Ramsay ?” said Friskerton.

“ The ring and coat identify him beyond the possibility of doubt,” said Scales.

“ My impression,” said Lord Wilsdown, musingly, “ is that he committed suicide. Probably, having once commenced a gambler’s existence, he continued it until reduced to destitution ; that he had a suicidal bias, is proved by the fact, that, but for my accidentally encountering him one evening, he was about to throw himself from Westmin-

ster Bridge. However, we can only conjecture, he is at any rate released from all future miseries, and I imagine from his peculiar disposition, that his life could scarcely upon the whole have proved a happy one."

"I think not too," said Scales, "and quite take your lordship's view as to his having committed suicide. He frequently talked about it, at the time I knew him."

"Well," said Friskerton, "if there is any truth in that rascally attorney's story, I should like to know who the mysterious gambler was, and why he had such luck. It is impossible to cheat the Bank, is it not?"

"Impossible," said Biron.

Monville contrived to baffle his pursuers, and after some half-hour's converse with the magistrate upon the heinous audacity of that individual's perjury, and many assurances on the part of Dogberry of his conviction that Lord Wilsdown was innocent of everything,

but having by his zeal in the cause of truth and justice, incurred the malicious enmity of the unscrupulous attorney, our hero and Lord Friskerton (the artist being otherwise engaged,) went to dine together at Verrey's; the former expressing the greatest annoyance at the escape of his unprincipled accuser, and vowing to get him transported to the Australian colonies, as soon as the public could lay hands upon his person, a catastrophe *entre nous* that would have given little real satisfaction to the bastard noble, who was well aware that by frequent dips, even into the deepest of wells, there is a considerable probability of at length reaching the bottom, and finding there a treasure which he considered far too costly to be shared with the rest of his fellow creatures—TRUTH.

“ Well,” thought Mesmer to himself, I have fought my way through that difficulty with *eclat*, but this fellow seems troublesome; I must ferret him out, having first put the police on a wrong scent, and—I think a *billet doux a la Cashall* will

relieve me of further trouble. Let me see, the duchess returns to town to-morrow, *that* must be decided beyond possibility of retraction; and then, as these infernal duns are becoming ferocious, I must draw another cheque upon the philosopher's stone to appease the cannibals. Little Neldoni is as bold as a tigress, and *rusée comme un démon* (to quote that fool Dumas, with his cottages ornées in Grosvenor Square and Piccadilly,)* her *clair voyance* is as perfect and she is still more manageable than that poor young puppy Ramsay; Ems and Aix shall be our *cour des miracles* † this time. What a fascinating little seraph Giulietta will look in pantaloons.

* See 'Pauline.' He is not alone in his absurdity. Several other popular French authors have become notorious for their blunders, regarding the geography, titles &c. of England and Germany.

† See Victor Hugo's 'Notre Dame.'

CHAPTER XVII.**DUNS.**

THE extravagance of our hero's expenditure, since his marriage, and the success of his gambling speculations, was almost without a precedent. The house in Belgrave Square to which he had moved, was furnished with a luxury which the famed palace of Aladdin could scarcely have competed with. The most splendid entertainments, rivalling in costliness

and magnificence, those of the later Roman emperors, followed one another in uninterrupted series.

Lord Wilsdown's debts were enormous in amount, and multitude; and notwithstanding the reports industriously circulated, at his secret instigation, as to the immense extent of his fortune; his creditors with a vague presentiment that all was not right, became clamorous for payment.

Mesmer was dunned incessantly. At first he humored the exorbitant rascals, as he termed them, by an occasional call, a suave and often repeated promise, or even a trifle upon account, but at length they began to grow outrageous in their demands, and as the witty author of a recent and instructive book on Dunnism expresses it, would *not* listen to the voice of the charmer.

“ Finding the constant succession of single knocks an unremitting nuisance, our adventurer managed to remedy it in the following manner.

He contrived a simple piece of machinery, by means of which the bell was detached from the bell-pull, and at the same time the knocker drawn *inside* the door, through a small trap, which immediately closed and displayed to the horrified creditor a portrait of a grinning skull with the following laconic inscription—

“ Wait till the day of judgment.”

The duns accordingly, finding that they could no longer enjoy the healthy and entertaining exercise of knocking, and that the bell declined ringing, resolved *nem con* to take the hint and to hasten the day of judgment--and execution as much as the proceedings of the Court of Queen's Bench rendered it practicable.

In this determination they displayed great *judgment* but the difficulty of *execution* was still greater. To commence an action at law against Lord Wilsdown for the recovery of debts, it was necessary to serve his lordship personally with a writ. Now as they could

never get into his house even to see one of the servants, this was by no means an easy matter to effect—Meesmer himself—though they did not know it—was residing at a villa a short distance from town where in truth he realized his noble progenitor's description of the vagrant Childe Harrold most eminently—

“ A youth

Who ne'er in virtue's ways did take delight
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of night,
Ah me ! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee,
Few earthly things found favor in his sight
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of low and high degree.

By the way, *apropos de duns*, the work we have alluded to above, ‘Hints on the nature and management of duns, by the hon. —, a younger son,’ contains some excellent hints on the subject, and afforded us an hour's agreeable amusement. The author is evidently a gentleman. There is much graceful humour both in his prose and his poetry, and as train of

lively irony pervades the whole. On the subject of primogeniture he writes with a vigour and bitterness we much admire, as well as his classical motto—

Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

Myself a victim to insatiate duns,
I learn to pity other younger sons.

We can sympathise with the indignation Mr. ——naturally feels against this absurd and unjust regulation, although ourselves an elder indeed an only son. But what avails primogeniture where the estate is not entailed—and the heir is disinherited.

There *are* such things as paternities, who shave so superhumanly close as to cut off their heirs with a shilling. Men have jested on the scaffold. John of Gaunt punned upon his name when in the agonies of dissolution. We take things coolly—for instance our claret iced and our time in telling a story. Glory to the sainted ghost of our grandfather for his prophetic forethought!

With freedom---twenty years, and---a thing

or two besides, what matters a few thousands more or less. Man can but love, strive, eat, drink---pshaw !

Integer vitæ, sceleris que purus
Non eget aught worth the trouble of having,
If you're neither government clerk, or soldier,
Europe's your homestead.

After all, even for the most favored eldest son, it is a dull, nervous state of existence, that *waiting*, and the courageous detrimental who cuts his own way boldly to fortune and is almost to be envied his excitement and triumph by the future lord of acres and mansions

Can all the fame, the honors, the wealth, the social pleasures of the world replace for an instant the ineffable sensations of the first pure passionate love of youth, or the generous emotions of benevolence before the icy sword of disappointment and the dull iron of cold wordly ambition have entered the recesses of the heart and chilled its pulsations to the monotony of what men term—life ? Can all the resources of art, and luxury, and

science, supply one thrill of unsophisticated delight, when doubt and present care are utter strangers, to the sated soul of experience?

Yes, thou imagination! most glorious possession of man, thou bearest us to other worlds, far, far removed from earthly cares and griefs. We become as little children—and a heaven is indeed opened unto us, we shake off the weary load of ancient and modern lore, forget the endless list of sciences through which men wade in turn, still seeking for great truths in hopeless vanity, the statistics, the agitations of mortals are forgotten, and the free spirit bounds with sportive wonder through the fields of fantasy, till awakened from our dreams we murmur with the illustrious German in mournful, albeit heroic arrogancy—

Philosophy I've pondered o'er
With medical and legal lore,
And—to my woe—theology
With eager thirst of knowledge high,
And here I stand, poor foolish man,
As wise as when I first began.

How true, indeed, the proverb which warns us that “where ignorance is bliss ’twere folly to be wise.” The fruit of the tree of knowledge is experience—bitter is its flavour.

To return from our imaginative rambles to the subject of duns.

However amusing it may be to read the Honorable Mr. ——’s facetious account of tailors humourously victimised by headless nails driven into deal chests for the especial accommodation of their wearied limbs, however we may laugh at the dismay of the horror-struck tradesman on beholding his debtor in the green (painted) stage of the Cholera, the Oxford duns belabouring the door whilst the detrimental escapes by a ladder from the back windows in order to keep his dinner appointment with the punctual governor; or the awful melodrama of the younger son’s last shirt, brought in with the dessert at the house where he *ought* to have dined, accompanied by the unpaid seven be-childrened washerwoman’s

elegant epistle, however we may laugh at all this, and however well adapted it may be to the purpose of the jester and the anecdotemonger, the subject will ever present several serious points for consideration.

In the first place a man who has duns either intends to pay them or he does not ; now although convinced that in nine cases out of ten, duns, tailors in particular, are a set of consummate rascals, and candidly confessing, by no stretch of philanthropy, could we bring ourselves to feel anything resembling pity for their sufferings, we nevertheless regard a man who runs up bills, without a distinct intention, and consciousness of the power of paying them at some not *very* remote period to the utmost farthing, as utterly devoid of principle, in fact not one whit better than a common swindler, and infinitely inferior in respectability to the bold highwayman, who, pistol in hand, rifles the pockets of the scared traveller, who has at least the opportunity, if sufficiently courageous

of defending his property with the butt end of his riding whip, or as in such cases, discretion is the better part of valour gallantly taking to his heels, and like a good christian, putting his trust in Providence, or the approach of a patrolling policeman.

In addition to the sacrifice of justice and honor involved by the non-paying system, the force of example upon the middling and lower classes is pernicious in the extreme, the follies which the Honourable This and Captain That indulge in are not unnaturally emulated with eagerness by Smith, the clerk, or Jones, the shopkeeper, and that which to the *gentleman* and the man of pleasure is generally productive of mere temporary embarrassment, or at any rate rarely leads to serious suffering, in a lower grade is often productive of bankruptcy, ruin, and all the horrors of poverty, not only to the misguided ape of fashion, but in many cases to his innocent wife and family who have neither participated in his pleasures nor his follies.

the collateral effects of such conduct are still more extensive in their operation.

“Be neither a borrower nor a lender,” said Polonius, “and we sincerely recommend every youth whose patience may have carried him thus far in our edifying discourse, to frame the above sentence in a dun colored frame, and suspend it in his *salon* as a *morceau* which cannot too often be read, marked, and inwardly digested; to you, especially young members of the aristocracy, and squirearchy be this motto especially recommended. We write from painful experience.

How our hero settled with his creditors, will be seen in the sequel.

CHAPTER XVIII

NOT AT HOME.

Hushed and trembling, her little soft white hands clasped upon her palpitating bosom, her eyes swimming in voluptuous tears, shaded by the long dark lashes of the cast-down lids, her exquisitely shaped lips compressed to paler rosiness, and her whole graceful form bent forward in an attitude of absorbed attention, sat the young Duchess of Villersden.

By her side was Mesmer, He spoke ra-

pidly with earnest gesture, and although almost in a whisper, not one word, one slightest intonation escaped the ear of his companion. They were alone in the boudoir of the duchess. To all others she denied herself.

“And are we,” continued Mesmer, “to be the slaves of the same musty rules of *bourgeois* etiquette, as the base grovelling herd, whose only morality, whose only sense of propriety hangs from the old saws and prejudices imbibed with the maternal milk, or the absurd customs and formalities impressed by the associations of maturer years, or are we to trust to the pure instincts and bright impulses of the heart, and with the boldness of freeborn spirits fearlessly grasp the happiness in our power. Dearest Julia—”

“Mesmer,” said the duchess, entreatingly, pushing back her fair ringlets from her throbbing temples, “be patient, oh, be patient! I cannot, must not listen to you.”

“ I will go then,” said Biron sadly, “ I will relieve you from my hateful presence.”

“ Do not torture me,” said the duchess, closing her eyes for a moment, and partially covering her face with one of her delicate hands to conceal the internal struggle of her feelings.

“ Yes,” resumed Mesmer, “ I will go — never to return, but first you shall know with how passionate, how devoted an attachment you have inspired me ; by night, by day, one dream, one vision of your ineffable being, your heavenly beauty, the silver melody of voice pervades my every sense, encircle my soul as with an atmosphere of brilliance, till my brain swims with maddening rapture at the bare thought that you *may* have felt a reciprocal sentiment whilst on the other hand there is darkness — darkness impenetrable, eternal, the darkness of despair, an annihilation ; I adore you, Julia—but pause, reflect before you plunge a dagger in a heart where

your name alone is graven, your empire alone for ever established, and ask yourself whether such another is readily to be found—or—lost !”

At the conclusion of this rhapsody, Lord Wilsdown had seized the hand of the duchess and pressed it wildly to his lips.

“Leave me,” exclaimed the duchess, vainly striving to resist an excitement gradually overpowering the efforts of her reason, “at least wait till the law-suit is decided.”

“It is decided,” said Mesmer, “at least virtually so, for the most eminent proctors inform me that there is no doubt of an immediate divorce being obtained.”

“Till then,” said Julia, faintly, her bosom burning with a feverish heat.

“No,” said Biron, you trifle with my feelings, I have confessed the inmost secrets of my soul, you know all, cruel, lovely, Julia, at once decide my fate, you love me or you love me not, own that you are mine, or let

us part for ever—doubt is the worst of miseries!”

“ I am yours,” said Julia, “ the moment the divorce is obtained.”

“ Angel,” said Mesmer, clasping her to his heart, and imprinting passionate kisses upon her cheeks and lips, “ you inspire me with new life, I feel my spirit expand beneath the influence of immeasurable delight ; yes,” continued he, half releasing her from his bold embrace, “ there must be some truth in the ancient legend, that in a former state of being, man and woman formed but one entity, whilst here the erring halves are doomed to wander, seeking ever with insatiable longing the renewal of their prenatal union, yet, alas, marriages are not made in heaven, as the popular proverb asserts, and, but too often like in-harmonious tones in music, unequal moieties are joined in crashing discord, hence all the miseries of a married life—happy are they, who, like us, find in the days of youth the

completion of their being here and hereafter to be united in celestial transports! I have fancied that I loved before this, more than once—it was but fancy—never till now have I felt sensations, such as now, irradiate my whole essence—Julia, it was, it must have been, it is our destiny to be united in the bonds of imperishable and unfading love. Once more, divine Julia, say you are mine, once more assure me of a happiness I scarcely dare to credit, so great, so transcendent does it appear!”

“It is our destiny!” murmured Julia, sinking powerless into the arms of the magnetiser.

* * * *

* * *

“Not at home? — nonsense!” said the Honorable Mr. Wigman, the Duchess's first cousin, and one of her grace's most perti-

nacious adorers—"I am sure she will be at home to me—I have something most particular to say to her---In fact I—I must and wi---will see her."

"Very well, sir," said the footman, "I will go and see if she is at home to you."

"Yes g—go and se—see," stammered the obstinate Wigman, who amongst other extraordinary illusions, cherished the firm conviction that his cousin was most desperately in love with his ungainly personality. He had in fact fixed upon this identical day for the ceremony of laying at her feet his heart and fortune, (which latter two straight lines might very conveniently enclosed) and having once, as he expressed himself, (he was a director in thirty seven companies—and a shareholder in seventy more) 'got the steam up' for the occasion, felt very much disinclined to forego his intention.

So full indeed was the would be M. P. for Wilsdown of his audacious project, and so

destitute of tact and natural good breeding was his character, that he actually followed upon the heels of the footman up stairs, and scarcely had that worthy sagaciously given notice of his presence by tapping at the door of the duchess of Villersden's boudoir, than the Honourable stood, in all his ugliness before the astonished eyes of Lord Wilsdown and his cousin.

Notwithstanding the familiar terms upon which she had lived with her cousin, Julia's indignation at this insolent intrusion, overpowered every feeling of embarrassment without seeming to notice Wigman, who had commenced some stammering apology; she turned with sparkling eyes to the terrified servant, and said severely—

“ I thought I told you that I was at home to no one ? ”

“ So I told Mr. Wigman, your grace, but he would persist in coming up. ”

“ I—I—had—no i—idea—that you were so

pup—pup—pressingly engaged,” said Wigman malignantly, backing towards the door.

Meanwhile, speechless with rage, Biron glanced from the dishevelled ringlets of the duchess, to the vulgar and ill-favored cub before them. Of all men perhaps Wigman was to him the most obnoxious; he had, Biron knew, attempted to black-ball him at one, of the clubs; a hundred times the insignificant little wretch had annoyed him by his odious and uncalled for interruption of his conversation with the duchess at balls and dinner-parties, and on many other occasions provoked his most unforgiving detestation. And now this *petit monstre*, this monkey scarcely have developed into man,* dared in his presence, impudently to intrude upon and insult the woman he for the time adored beyond all other existences. Mesmer did not

* See The Vestiges of Creation.

stay to reflect upon consequences, with eyes flashing scorn and vengeance, he sprang upon the hapless Wigman, seized him by the middle and despite his struggles, whirled him high in the air—luckily for the Honourable, the window did not happen to be open—and literally kicked him to the extreme end of the adjoining saloon, where he fell amid the congenial crash of a pile of china monstrosities, which his fall shivered into ten thousand fragments. Frightened almost into fits, though physically but slightly damaged, Wigman contrived to escape from the room, and to roll down the staircase into the street, where his extraordinary appearance attracted no little ridicule and attention from the amazed passengers. He heeded not their gibes nor their surprise, but rushing madly on, in horrified bewilderment, *ventre a terre* checked not his swift pace till he fell breathless and exhausted upon the threshold of Freybourg's cigar chop in Pall Mall, in which

in his confusion he had mistaken for the door of the Athenæum club-house.

* * * * *

Two days afterwards, it was known that a duel had been fought between Lord Wilsdown and the Honorable Mr. Wigman, and that the latter had been seriously wounded.

Amputation above the knee followed, and a cork leg was ordered upon credit from the manufacturer of those ingenious appendages. Wigman subsequently became remarkable for his adherence to minutest points of punctilio and etiquette, which plainly shews the advantage of being chastised by Providence in due and fitting season.

CHAPTER XX**THE VALET.**

WHEN servants imagine that their masters cannot do without them, they are apt to grow exceedingly consequential and impertinent; thus we not unfrequently find elderly gentlemen and ladies, and especially bachelors and old maids, all but the slave of their own "slavies;" from long habit, that second nature of mortals, aversion to change and the dread of not easily

finding fresh attendant spirits, who might accommodate themselves to their ways, peculiarities, and eccentricities, confident in the influence they have acquired and established; these ancient domestics frequently presume most outrageously upon the easy, good temper of their masters and mistresses, even to the extent of disputing their commands, intruding, unasked, advice, and openly criticising their actions.

Enlightened by experience, they regard a *month's warning* with sovereign contempt, and scarcely deign to notice the perhaps often repeated threat of summary dismissal, well knowing that but a slight apology is generally sufficient to reinstate them in all their former position.

Now, although we should sincerely rejoice to see the time when menial service with all its petty annoyances, may be almost if not totally dispensed with, by the substitution of innumerable ingenious improvements in domestic ma-

chinery, a climax by no means so difficult of attainment as may at first sight be imagined, we can well understand and respect this weakness towards old and attached retainers of a family who often, as in the Master of Ravenswood's hoary butler in Scott's well known 'Bride of Lammermoor,' completely merge their own individual pride and feelings in the honor of their lords and ladies.

Far different, however, is the case when the presumption of the servitor is founded upon the ill-judged familiarity of the highest powers, such as, not to mention the excessive imprudence of delaying the payment of their wages, any confidence between a lady and her maid, or a gentleman and his valet or tiger, in matters of finance, still worse of love, and worst of all love where the gratification of the passions is not founded upon the precise maintenance of the ten commandments, delivered to Moses from the Mount of *Sinai* or the moral

code acknowledged by the present sinful generation.

Now Mesmer, though with secret misgivings, had been necessitated, in affairs of this kind, to confide most alarmingly in the discretion of his acute valet Sago ; and even in other and more dangerous adventures to place himself considerably in the power of that trusty personage. Sago had also kept his eyes open to a much wider extent than his machiavellian master was aware of, who, absorbed in a multitude of desperate and complicated schemes, occasionally released, unconsciously, the habitual caution of his behaviour towards his more subordinate agents. The worthy factotum had consequently imbibed, in addition to his actual knowledge of facts, a variety of shrewd suspicions, amounting almost to certainties, as to the Right Honorable Baron of Wilsdown's conduct and proceedings.

The valet at length imagined that he was

getting the upper hand, gave himself airs, infringed his master's order in things of minor importance, and on the Count's reprimanding him, scowled, looked black, and turned sulky with very dignified independence. Nevertheless he had hitherto stood too much in awe of his master to venture on even the slightest verbal insolence, or retort, till one morning, shortly after the day on which the duel between Biron and Wigman occurred, the following scene took place in the dressing room of the former.

“Sago,” said Mesmer, “where the devil are those boots with the red morocco tops?”

“What boots, my lord?” said the valet.

“Those with the red morocco tops,” replied Biron, “those that you have given me are too small,” and so saying, the young peer, who was in a very irritable mood, on account of his pecuniary difficulties, whirled the ill fitting specimen of Hoby's genius to the other end of the apartment, and in so doing, destroyed

a magnificent Psyche, which accident tended by no means to soften his ill humour.

“Where are the boots, you rascal,” reiterated Mesmer, with increasing ire.

“I don’t remember any boots with red morocco tops,” said Sago, doggedly, “and I am not a rascal, whatever some people ——”

The remainder of the valet’s reply was lost in muttered indistinctness.

“What is that you are saying,” said Lord Wiledown, in a furious passion, catching up a boot jack, and raising it with a threatening air.

“My Lord, from this instant I quit your service,” said Sago, looking with brazen assurance at his master.

“Nonsense,” said Biron, suddenly sobered by this unexpected climax, my nerves are out of order this morning.—I was hasty—get me the boots at once, and do not let this occur again.”

"I don't know what boots your lordship means," said Sago, insolently.

"Come, come," said Biron, with a good humored smile, "the *ne plus ultra* of successful affectation, you make too free with my wardrobe Sag, I cannot afford a new pair of boots every day."

"H—m," said the valet, half aloud, "I do not see why not, since they are never paid for."

"That is the bootmaker's affair," said Mesmer, then continued in a tone intended to check further familiarity, "but enough of this, bring me my boots and help me on with my coat, I must go out immediately."

"Perhaps my lord before you go," said Sago, submissively, without, however, making any movement towards fulfilling the commands of our adventurer, "you will have the kindness to pay me my wages and ——"

"Pooh," said Lord Wilsdown, "you ungrateful dog, have I not doubled your pay, and

allowed you every possible indulgence, where will you find another master like me?"

"I never before was accused of dishonesty!" said Sago, with an air of virtuous indignation.

"Nor are you now, my good fellow," said Biron, conciliatingly, "so set your mind easy on that head, and do not be such a fool to your own interest as to leave a place where you are better off than you can possibly be anywhere else, besides I have not done half for you that I intend."

"Oh! certainly, my lord," said Sago, still more submissively, and beginning to dust a coat which he took from a wardrobe; "if your lordship will double my present wages, I have not the slightest objection to stay."

Scarcely had the valet come to the pith and marrow of this most impudent demand, than the count, with every appearance of renewed passion, burst out with,

"You exorbitant, avaricious scoundrel!"

At the same moment, hurling the boot-jack

at the audacious delinquent, who, narrowly escaping a broken head, vanished with the rapidity of lightning, from the apartment.

Should the reader, however, imagine that this last *coup* was a genuine ebullition of passion on the part of our hero, he is egregiously mistaken—for having perfectly recovered his self-command the instant that Sago threatened to leave him, every subsequent word he had uttered, was the result of deliberate calculation, even the violence of the finale, was executed in perfectly cool blood. Seeing clearly, that if once yielded to, there would be no limit to the audacity of the valet's extortions; Mesmer at once, came to the conclusion, that with such a creature, the boldest course was the safest, and determined, by showing that he was not to be trifled with, effectually to conclude the business.

Not for a moment did he suspect that Sago would really put his threat into execution.

“He must see,” thought Mesmer, “that it is against his interest to quit so liberal a master ; and by his interests, he will, of course, be guided.”

It is one of the common mistakes of worldly men ; and our hero shared the error greatly—to underrate the sensibilities, likings, dislikings, and passions, amongst the inferior grades of society ; and to imagine that at all times, pecuniary interest is, with them, the predominating motive — often, this is, indeed, the case—however, there are frequent exceptions to the rule.

Sago had, for some time past, felt uneasy at the nature of many proceedings he was compelled to assist in ; he began to suspect too, far greater atrocities than those in which he was implicated, and some fears for his personal security, added to a slight stirring of latent, conscientious feeling, caused him to long for freedom from the mysterious web, in the weaving of which, he half blindly assisted.

Twenty minutes had elapsed, and Lord Wilsdown rang his bell, not doubting that but Sago would, as usual, answer its summons, and the storm blow over without further trouble. He was mistaken. The valet had already departed.

CHAPTER XX.

THE UNREPENTANT.

THE carriage of Lord Wilsdown rattled swiftly up to the door of Prince de Rosenberg's house in Park-lane, and the footman springing nimbly to the ground, produced a roll of thunder from the knocker, that would have done credit to a by-stroke of the cloud compelling *Zeus*. The door was opened, and our adventurer shown once more into the library of *Aurelius*.

"Be seated, my lord," said the prince, in a tone of calm dignity, pointing to a chair precisely opposite to that in which he himself was seated "you received my note?"

"I did," replied Biron, in stern and measured accents; "and must confess myself at a loss to conjecture for what purpose, after all that has passed, your Highness should have so specially desired this interview."

"With no mere object of personal gratification, you may imagine," resumed Aurelius, "no, whatever you may think to the contrary, to insure the welfare of another inexpressibly dear to me, and even of yourself, was my only motive for requesting this meeting."

"Your Highness," said Mesmer, with cold and studied politeness; "I am prepared to hear with patience, and to weigh dispassionately, anything you may have to say or propose; though I can scarcely conceive, what interest you can take in my welfare."

"No," replied Aurelius, "the injurer but

rarely forgives ; and with difficulty believes, that the injured can do ought than reciprocate his hatred."

"The meaning of your Highness's last observation," said Biron, "is a little obscure ; in the eyes of all the world, *you* are the injuring, and *I* the injured party."

"Possibly, but not in the eyes of our own consciences," said Aurelius, firmly.

"And you are mistaken," continued Biron, "if you suppose that I cherish any vindictive feelings. Though not pretending to your highness's profundity, I, too, have dabbled a little in the study of practical, moral philosophy ; you seduced my wife, reflection showed me that the love of a woman who is false is unworthy of regret. Lady Wilsdown and I did not assimilate ; we were unfitted for one another ; in short, I am now persuaded, that she was not the woman destined to secure my permanent happiness ; my wish, therefore, was to be released from this ill-chosen connexion with

all convenient speed, in order to try a new experiment in the lottery of love, with a hope of forming a more suitable and agreeable alliance. A divorce obtained, I care not how soon Augusta Biron becomes Princess de Rosenberg."

"I could admire the liberality of your sentiments, were I less perfectly acquainted with their motives, but that is not now the question; my object in sending for you to day, is to tell you that I possess a complete key to your conduct; that I am acquainted with every atrocity you have perpetrated within the last few years—in fine, that I am fully informed of every fact relating to yourself and your actions, which you are most desirous of concealing."

"Be kind enough to answer your own enigmas," said Biron, with inimitable coolness, and a stare of astonished credulity.

"In the first place then," said the prince, "I have ascertained that you were not in Devonshire at the time you asserted, but that, on the contrary, there is strong presumptive evidence

of your having been in Paris at that period, under a false name and in disguise; on the importance of this discovery, I make no comments.

Biron made no reply, but by an expressive, upward glance, strove plainly to express his conviction that the prince had either taken leave of his senses or was possessed by the devil; by a slight shake of the head, he also implied the fruitlessness of attempting to reason with, or exhibiting anger towards an individual with so unfortunate a deranged organism. In reality, he thought it wisest to hear patiently all the prince had to say, in order clearly to arrive at the extent of Aurelius's information, and the dangers by which he himself was immediately threatened.

"Secondly," resumed de Rosenberg, without paying much attention to the above display of our hero's histrionic talents; "I have proofs that the foil used in your combat with Lord Granville, was previously prepared for the occa-

nier; that, consequently, you were guilty of his deliberate and premeditated murder."

"Go on!" said Birton.

"Thirdly, Adolphus Cashall died within ten minutes after receiving a letter which you wrote him, signed with an assumed name.

"Pray proceed, your Highness, it is positively quite amusing."

"Lastly, by a conspiracy of the basest, and most infamous description, you attempted to ruin the reputation of a virtuous wife, whose only crime, was a devotion to one so lost to every sense of honour, justice, and virtue, as yourself."

"Cannot the exuberant imagination of your Highness, add a few more items to the catalogue," said the impostor, with a laugh.

To enumerate such trifles in comparison to the enormity of the crimes I have already charged you with, would be useless, or I might allude to the immense sums of which you have robbed Lord Friskerton, myself, and hundreds

of others in every possible way, but I should not omit to mention that I am acquainted with the whole scheme, by means of which you succeeded in breaking the banks of the gambling houses, in Paris, and several of the most fashionable German watering places; and the fate of the unfortunate clairvoyant to whose assistance you owed your success is but too evident.

“I scarcely know,” said Mesmer, “what to reply to this tissue of insanity, did you merely wish to insult me, you would scarcely have adopted so roundabout a course of proceeding, I can therefore only regard you as the victim of some unfortunate delusion: will your Highness still further favor me by informing me of your object in making these unheard of communications.

“Man,” exclaimed Aurelius, “it is fearful to see you so utterly dead to every sensation of remorse or contrition, but I will not yet give up all hope. Steeped as you are in crime, and

on reflection I am unacquainted, perhaps, of the tide of your evil deeds ; you did not create yourself, you did not make your disposition your organism, such as it is. The germs of human thoughts and action like all other entities have existed from eternity, he who studies nature and causation, desires neither blood nor punishment, acknowledges neither merit nor desert, but regard each thing simply with reference to its capacities for producing and increasing happiness, the vital principle of the universe, the criminal is not crushed to satiate the thirst of vengeance, but to remove a noxious cancer from society, to prevent the commission of fresh crimes in his own person, and by example to deter others from a similar course, thus improving the general tone of morality, and consequently happiness of mankind, but could the same ends be obtained by reforming, instead of punishing, how far more glorious a triumph for the cause of benevolence and virtue ! The past is irrevocable, neither your

death nor your remorse can efface from the page of time the horrors you have perpetrated, yet even, great as they are they may be atoned for; aye more than atoned for by reformation, and a life henceforward spent in benefitting your fellow creatures as unremittingly as you have hitherto persecuted them; I now offer you the choice between repairing, to the utmost in your power, the injuries you have inflicted on those yet surviving to receive compensation, and a secure retreat into some foreign country, where you may reside uninterfered with, and free from molestation, so long as you are guilty of no fresh outrage against your race, on the other hand ————”

“ Well,” said Mesmer, whom the imminence of his peril only served to inspire with more desperate audacity, what, if I regard your presumptuous proposition with all the contempt such ridiculous falsehood and childish drivelling of moral cant alone deserves.

“ Then” said Aurelius sternly, “ I deliver

you into the hands of justice, and you yourself know best, what hope of escape would remain for you."

"Now hear me," said Lord Wilsdown, utterly unmoved by this last startling announcement, "whatever have been my deeds, were they as spotless and innocent as you imagine your own to be, or, in your own language, ten times more criminal and infamous than you have represented; I have acted upon a system which, if less attractive, and ostentatious than the sublime philanthropy you profess has, at least, the advantage of unswerving consistency in its favour; you seek for an objective happiness in regarding yourself as an instrument for the benefit and amelioration of mankind. I sought a purely subjective felicity by regarding all mankind as the mere tools or victims of my pleasure, how in the microcosm of self am I to separate the ideal from the real, the shadow from the substance, the effect from the cause;

how in fine am I to divide the internal from the external existence, or to know that those things which I perceive exist elsewhere than in the constitution of my own mind, and even allowing them to exist—what motive should induce me to prefer their enjoyment to my own, or to sympathise for a moment with their pleasures, or their sufferings *cogito ergo sum*,” said Descartes, “I think therefore I am, in my own being concentrates my whole existence, from my own consciousness of being radiates my conception of the universe.”

“Is it possible that no spark of regret for your past actions, no vestige of justice or benevolence can leaven this fiend like and stupendous egotism,” exclaimed the Prince, gazing with painful anxiety on the dark and inscrutable being before him.

“I have explained my system,” said Mesmer laconically.

“Infinite powers!” said Aurelius, “that such a .

person, such talents and intellects should have been bestowed, and not one moral impulse given to restrain and guide them; repent before it is too late."

As when the guest of stone vainly appealed to the impious and inflexible Spaniard—as when the ambassador of heaven fruitlessly addressed his message to the rebellious angels, impervious in the pride of fallen dignity; thus Mesmer the Impostor, the Man without a conscience, the hero of a thousand crimes, replied with fearless scorn to the adjuration of Aurelius—"NEVER."

"One moment pause, reflect."

"Never!" again retorted Mesmer.

The countenance of Aurelius would have well served as a model for that of the divine prophet of Judah, when on the mountain's summit, at once denouncing and lamenting the fall of the great capital, and the magnificent though polluted temple; so sublime was the

expression of pitying sorrow pervading his regular and dignified features.

“To the safety of the many, the individual must be sacrificed,” said he with sad resolution.

“I will go,” said Mesmer, suddenly rising.

“It is too late,” said the Prince.

“How so?”

“The police are at hand ready to seize your person.”

“Then I will save them the trouble,” said Mesmer, drawing a small phial from his pocket, “this bottle contains prussic acid.”

“It is well,” said Aurelius firmly, “better to die so than—”

“Perish like a Sheppard or a Greenacre,” completed Mesmer with a smile, “such was never my destiny.”

At this moment a carriage stopped at the door, it contained Merlmore, Colonel Rossmill and the attorney Monville, They entered the library together.

Monville started at the sight of Biron and kept cautiously behind his companions.

“ Still more discoveries,” said Merlmore to the prince. “ A girl, who it seems has been for some considerable time past kept a prisoner at Wilsdown, has escaped from the castle, begged her way to London, and communicated to us some most extraordinary circumstances.”

“ Her name ?” said Mesmer.

“ Clara Gordon,” replied Merlmore.

“ I thought so,” said Biron, looking at his watch, and deliberately uncorking the poison.

“ And stranger still,” said Monville in a low voice to the prince, “ a pocket book has been found in the drawer of a dressing-table, at the *Hotel du Diable*, Paris, which conclusively proves, from a half written letter it contains, the identity of Lord Wilsdown with the disguised gambler, and of his companion the unfortunate Theodore Ramsay, of whose murder there can no longer remain the slightest question.”

“On that head,” said the prince, “I have just obtained some remarkable revelations,” and Aurelius ringing the bell desired Mr. Sago to be sent to him.

Meanwhile, Merlmore briefly detailed the history of our adventurer's origin, and the supposed destruction of the miser's will, of which a copy it appears was still extant.

“It is even suspected,” thrust in Monville officiously, “that the days of the old man were unnaturally shortened.”

“Miserable cur,” exclaimed Mesmer with fierce contempt, abruptly advancing, and thus getting at least two yards nearer to the door, whilst he felt in his bosom for a brace of pistols of wonderfully delicate and minute manufacture, which he invariably carried about with him in order to be prepared for emergencies like the present—“You think to realize the fable of the cowardly ass kicking the fallen lion; you will find yourself mistaken. In this paper,” and Mesmer produced a letter carefully

sealed and addressed to Colonel Rossmill, "is contained a full account of Mr. Monville's paltry rascalities, and the proofs necessary to substantiate them."

"You surely will not credit," began Monville.

"Pshaw!" said Colonel Rossmill interrupting his protestation of innocence, "that will be a matter for after consideration."

"Yes," said Mesmer, "when I am in my grave you will do me justice, and perhaps do justice to yonder pettyfogger also; but it is not worth while to waste words upon such refuse—ah!" continued he, as at this crisis Sago entered the room, "you have brought my discarded valet to give evidence against me, a most credible witness truly, I did not expect this of you, Prince!"

Sago, at the command of Aurelius, deposed to the facts of Biron's magnetizing Ramsay, and the peculiar arrangements which

he had assisted in making for the experiments with cards.

To Merlmore and Colonel Rossmill no further explanation was necessary, by a look simultaneously exchanged with Aurelius, they showed that the whole mystery was unravelled to them.

Sago then began to communicate a variety of other facts relative to his master's conduct, especially with reference to the death of Lord Granville, Cashall, and the evidence adduced against Augusta, when a violent knock at the door turned the attention of the company in an entirely new direction.

"It is yet time," whispered Aurelius.

Biron shook his head resolutely.

A smile of triumph illuminated the countenance of the impostor; "at length," he murmured, as his ears caught the sound of a furious voice outside—

"Your health, Prince," said he, aloud.
"Colonel, I leave you my skull as a legacy,"

And putting the phial of poison to his lips, he convulsively imbibed its contents ; a terrible change came over his features ; his whole frame quivered for a moment, as if from the effect of the most painful spasms, and with a suppressed groan, he fell heavily to the ground !

“ He is dead !” exclaimed the prince.

“ Dead !” echoed his companions.

At this moment, the door was thrown open with tremendous violence, and Guy Merlmore, the madman, burst wildly into the room.

“ It is the hour !” he shouted, with ferocious exultation ; “ I am to find him here. The magician Fracabas, has sworn it ! Where is he ? where is Monville ? Answer me, Melchisidec !” thundered the lunatic, seizing Colonel Rosmill by the collar. “ Ah ! I see the reptile !”

And darting upon the attorney, who was endeavouring to creep under the table, in a cold agony of trepidation ; with Herculean force he

tore him from the ground, and before any one could interfere in his behalf, had dashed the unfortunate wretch through one of the windows, with such irresistible violence, that his body, impaled upon the spikes of the railings in front of the house, writhed in the most fearful torture.

For some minutes, the policemen, who were waiting outside to arrest Biron, were unable to release Monville from his painful position, on account of the violence with which he kicked and struggled ; when the Prince, Colonel Rosmill, Merlmore and Sago, rushing out in horror-struck excitement, reached the street, they found him lying senseless upon the pavement ; he was immediately taken into the house, and the best medical attendance procured. In order to avoid recurrence to this subject, we may as well state, that after enduring the most excruciating pain, Monville expired the same evening, having first received the sacrament, and confessed to a long list of iniquities of the most heinous description.

In this world he deserved his fate ; his repentance, if genuine, may insure his welfare in the next.

Meanwhile, on returning to the library they found that the madman had disappeared, and that the corpse of the impostor was no where to be found.

“ We have been laughed at ! ” exclaimed Aurelius, “ he has escaped ; but I see the police are in pursuit.”

“ He cannot have gone far ! ” exclaimed Merlmore, rushing into the street.

“ I shall never get a cast of his head,” growled the phrenologist, hastily following his example.

“ I hardly know,” thought the prince, musingly ; “ whether I most desire his capture or his escape—such specimens are unique studies of human nature.”

“ He would give old Harry fifty out of a hundred, and beat him by five-and-forty,” muttered Sago, as he joined in the pursuit ; “ they’ll

never catch him—master's a match for all the policemen in the universe, squared and cubed on the most algebraic principles."

Whilst the valet indulged in the above arithmetical reflections, the police were, indeed, in pursuit of the wrong man—that is, of Guy Merlmore, the maniac, who, having rushed from the house a moment previous to our adventurer, coursed rapidly along the streets with the whole rabble of pursuers behind him. Biron having quietly entered a shop with double entrance, had effected a convenient escape in one of Hanson's Patent safety conveyances.

They ultimately succeeded in recapturing the lunatic, but the most remarkable occurrence that happened during the chase was an accident which occurred to two ladies in a fly, the horse of which taking fright at the passing apparition of the madman, dashed furiously down an area, displacing the railings in his course, plunged his head through the kitchen window, and

managed to get his hinder legs into a water butt; the ladies escaped without injury, and the horse was led out of the hall door by a powdered footman, apparently in a perfect state of bodily preservation.

CHAPTER XXII.

WILD THOUGHTS AND DEEDS.

LATE in the night a solitary horseman, covered with dust, spurred up to the ancient portal of Wilsdown. The drowsy porter gazed with astonishment at his master, as in sombre silence, he rode through the gate. The noble steed, however, being completely exhausted, dropped down dead before they were half way up the avenue, and Biron proceeded on foot towards the castle. There, without, disturbing the

repose of any of the servants, he unlocked a small postern, and having lighted a lamp of silver, from some lucifers he carried in his pocket, stepped gently along a broad corridor, and with the silence of death ascended the wide staircase. The frescos and statues looked spectral, and lifelike, as the faint gleam of the lamp fell upon their faces in passing, and the dark silent form of Lord Wilsdown himself seemed to glide through the night like a wandering shadow from the grave-yard. He stopped at the door of one of the bedrooms, and cautiously entering the apartment advanced on tip toe to the bed side of the occupant.

What is there in nature, or imagination, more beautiful than the calm repose of female loveliness, more reminding us of the divine purity of celestial essences than a fair and gentle girl in the deep sleep of youthful health—who that hath gazed upon such a picture, feels not the weakness and inadequacy of sculpture to pourtray ideal woman—the perfection of

creation's works. Silent and pensive Mesmer regarded, for a time, the countenance of Giulietta Neldoni—more intent grew his look, and he made some slow passes with his hands, at the distance of a few inches from the coverlid, towards her feet. A gradual change came over her features, and in a few minutes the state of normal sleep in which she had originally lain, was deepened into a profound magnetic trance, and her eyes opened with that peculiar, deathlike expression, we have more than once had occasion to allude to.

“Giulietta, are you awake?”

“Yes!”

“I wish you to think deeply!”

“I will try—you wish me to think of yourself?”

“I do?”

“You are threatened with danger!”

“Immediate?”

“No—not immediate.”

“What do you see?”

"I see"—responded the *clair voyante*, after a pause, and speaking with difficulty in slow, yet certain accents, "I see men entering the house and asking for you?"

"Proceed! and I?"

"You are gone—far, far, away."

"What is the hour?"

"It is—a quarter past five!"

"What hour?"

"A quarter past five!"

"You are sure?"

"Sure—why do you doubt me!"

"I do not doubt you," said Biron, soothingly, "now sleep for ten minutes, and then awake."

The somnambulist fell back upon her pillow, and at the end of the time specified returned from the magnetic to the natural sleep, when she was awakened by Mesmer.

"Well Giulietta!"

"Oh! you are returned at last—how glad I

am to see you," exclaimed the Italian, embracing her mysterious lover.

"Tell me your dreams?"

"Oh! so strange!—I thought the rain was pouring down in torrents, and heard it distinctly beating against the window—do look out and see if it really is so?"

"I have but just arrived—not a drop of rain has fallen—the dust was intolerable."

Mesmer advanced to the casement, and drew aside the curtains—the sky had suddenly become dark, lowering, and in another moment a terrific storm had burst, bright flashes of lightning irradiated every part of the heavens, and the roar of the thunder seemed to shake the very foundations of the castle.

"It is now three o'clock, said Biron, looking at his time-piece—you have an hour for preparation Giulietta—dress yourself, put up a few things in a bundle, not too heavy for you to carry in your hand, and come to me in the black chamber.

“ But what is the meaning---?”

“ Ask no questions, time is precious—if you love me, obey at once—hereafter all shall be explained.” And Biron quitted the room.

The black chamber was his own especial sanctum ; arrived there, he seated himself at a desk, and wrote, with great rapidity, several letters, which he carefully sealed and directed ; he then looked over some papers in a large pocket book, and having apparently satisfied himself that none were missing, placed them securely in the breast pocket of his coat, and deliberately proceeded to examine and load a brace of pistols of the finest and most ornamental workmanship.

“ By this time those boxes must be at Bristol,” muttered the impostor. I think all has been cared for—what remains to be done is quickly accomplished.”

And the adventurer gazed with a sombre expression upon the raging of the tempest without, whilst vision-like reminiscences of

his past existence, coursed meteor-like through the gloom of his soul.

“Almost,” he exclaimed, whilst more than mortal despair darkened the pale beauty of his features, “Almost might I be tempted to believe in the cant of religion, and the solemn saws of the moralists—and deem it possible that I have taken the unwise course, that my bold and triumphant career has been but a brilliant madness! Alas what is life without hope—and I *hoped*—to live for the life of man in ceaseless enjoyment, and unflagging excitement. But how little did I anticipate the present icy hell that freezes and darkens my being!

“Men I despise—for even me, their habitual meanness, avarice and stupid hypocrisy, ineffably disgusts. Cowardly pigmies! whose littleness of soul, is alike incapable of the lofty brightness of philosophy and virtue, and the sublime darkness of great and daring crime. Grovelling worms! plodding onwards in their filth, ignorant alike of their natures and the

true objects of their existence—and yet *these*, arrogate to themselves the first rank in creation, call themselves the especial care of the Eternal and All-pervading spirit, and boast that the sun's glorious orb was made alone to light their sordid toils. What sympathy can I feel with such as these—or am I some ill-fated demon cased in the form of man, as punishment for deeds in other worlds. Have I not ransacked the stores of science, thought and imagination, am I not satiated with every most exquisite delight of the senses—what now remains?—war, horror, and desolation. What avails me this perfection of outward form—this strength of limb—this energy of intellect—the command of wealth—the art to beguile—to charm—to rule mankind; when the soul has grown old within the youthful body, and at five and twenty the spirit is weary of existence. And Aurelius talked of reformation!—*reformation*—yes I *will* reform—utterly, spontaneously, for ever reform!—but it is not for living being to dictate to the son of Byron how or when

he shall fulfil his destiny. They think they have me in their power, that they have crushed me by their exertions and machinations—there has been no contest, they have but hastened my resolution.

* * * *

In less than the time appointed, la Signora entered the black chamber.

“ You are ready ?” said Mesmer.

“ Quite, where are we going ?”

“ We do not go together.”

“ Not together—what do you mean !” exclaimed Giulietta in dismay.

Biron’s explanation was brief but conclusive, he placed a rouleau of gold and a small pocket-book in the hands of the Italian, and having thrown a common plaid cloak over her shoulders conducted her, sobbing bitterly, to the door by which he had entered the castle.

“ Show this card to the porter, and he will

let you pass—the railway station is but a mile from hence—you will find the boxes I mentioned at Bristol—we meet in another world—farewell, Giulietta!”

The bewildered girl clung for some minutes to Lord Wilsdown with many passionate protestations of love and unchanging affection; then tearing herself away, walked rapidly towards the gate of the park, whilst Mesmer noiselessly bent his steps towards the lower regions of the castle, still carrying the lamp in his hand to assist his progress.

At length he reached the cellar in which Valence the highwayman was confined, and having cautiously raised the trap-door called gently on his prisoner by name,

“Who is there?” exclaimed the robber starting from an uneasy slumber.

“I,” replied Mesmer, “I am come to set you at liberty.”

“At liberty!” cried Valence, overwhelmed with joy at this unexpected good fortune, “I

shall be for ever grateful to your lordship—but you are not mocking me?”

“Certainly not,” replied the lord of the castle, “I am about to get a ladder directly—but make no noise, and before you come up put on this suit of clothes and clean linen,” our adventurer here threw the said garments down to Valence, “you will find in the pockets a hundred pounds,” continued Biron, “for I do not wish to send you naked into the world.”

When the highwayman had completed his toilette, Mesmer even whimsically insisting upon his perfuming himself and oiling and combing his hair, the latter proceeded to let down the ladder.

“But before I give you your freedom,” said Biron, “swear to me by all that is sacred, (as nothing was sacred to Biron, it is difficult to conceive what idea he associated with the above phrase,) to reform your life and morals, the folly of which must by this time be clear

to you, to the utmost of your power, and to lead a new and an honest life."

"I swear!" said Valence, and the rascal was ready to swear black was white, provided he were only released from limbo.

"Then come up," said Mesmer authoritatively.

In an instant the robber had scaled the ladder; he looked much thinner than of old, but spare diet had purified his blood, and improved his complexion. Biron's clothes fitted him now admirably, though somewhat tightly.

"Follow me," said Mesmer, "and in silence!"

* * * * *

The sudden report of a pistol re-echoed through the castle, and roused all the domestics from their slumbers. Scarcely had a few of them huddled on their clothes and begun to

descend the staircase, than the gates reverberated beneath loud and repeated knocks, whilst the storm without resumed with tenfold violence.

CHAPTER XXII.

FIRE.

“ Good God! he has killed himself !” exclaimed the first servant who entered the black chamber, recoiling in horror from the bloody spectacle that presented itself.

“ He has committed suicide !”

“ A case of *felo de se*,” said one of the constables who had just arrived to arrest him, “ we heard the report without.”

“ His head is blown to atoms !” exclaimed another, “ not a feature is to be distinguished.”

“ The best thing he could do with himself,” muttered a third, “ he was a bad un, and no mistake !”

“ Why what had he done ?” cried the servants in chorus.

“ Murders, robberies, forgeries, perjury !” replied the constable ; and the gaping domestics crowded round him to listen to the marvellous tale he had to disclose, whilst one only slunk away in order to profit by the opportunity, and pillage unobserved before it was too late.

Several of the young girls by this time had entered the room, and gazed with horror stricken astonishment upon the form of the dead man which rested upon a sofa in the attitude most favored by Mesmer whilst living. His right hand still grasped the instrument of death. He had left no sign or token behind him of any description. The window was open as if he had wished to gaze

Sir Henry ———, a physician of eminence, who happened to be present, after examining the body of Lord Granville, announced the fact that life was hopelessly extinct.

“Do not say so ; let every means be tried ; I would give all my fortune, could he be restored to life !” exclaimed Biron with passionate earnestness.

“Everything shall be done that is possible,” replied the physician, “but all the wealth of the Indies could not restore the vital spark once extinct, or buy for Lord Granville one moment of life.”

Mesmer pressed his hand convulsively to his forehead. Every one crowded round him endeavouring to console him by assurances of the total absence of all blame to him, and similar appropriate remarks.

“We had better retire,” said one of the guests at length.

“Yes,” said Friskerton, “I think it would be better ; I will remain with my poor friend,

and Somerton, do you go directly to the Duke's and communicate the tidings to the servants that they may not be shocked to-morrow, in case it should find its way into the papers."

Friskerton felt all his friendship for Birou return at this sudden stroke of misfortune.

The Duchess of Villersden had fainted away and was sent home in her carriage, in an almost senseless state.

The body of Lord Granville was removed to one of the bed-rooms as soon as every hope of resuscitation had vanished.

Prince Aurelius lingered after the rest had departed, and going up to Birou, said feelingly, but firmly—

"My dear Count, this is a terrible accident, but to make yourself utterly miserable on that account, would be wrong ; you are perfectly innocent of this dreadful accident ; every body will acknowledge that."

for the last time upon the heavens and their starry host. In the confusion no one remarked that Giulietta Neldoni was alone absent.

* * * *

Suddenly, a shock like an earthquake was felt by the collected tenants of the black chamber, and before they had time to mark the pale fear gleaming from each other's countenances, a terrible explosion took place beneath them, and the tower containing that chamber was a ruin, all within it were destroyed; and blackened, or dismembered, corpses bestrewed the terrace and the garden. Some were thrown to the distance of nearly a hundred yards. Where now was the beauty that had ravished the senses, the voices, that had filled the air with their melody?

But it was fitting that the loves of the impostor should perish with him! better to die his victims, than live for future infamy!—Oh,

the mine of our hero was well contrived, and and the slow match bath bravely done its duty!

The solitary menial heard the noise and felt the shock of the explosion, a panic seized his soul, he dashed aside his booty, and fell upon his knees to pray, in fear and trembling. By degrees, he recovered sufficient courage to venture from his lurking place, and to behold the disastrous effects of the explosion. Cold sweat burst from his pores, he shouted aloud—no answer was returned, he searched the castle and found no living comrade.

“It is a judgment and a warning!” he exclaimed, and fled from the house of desolation a wiser and a sadder man.

He told his tale to the farmers in the neighbourhood. They all heaped curses upon the head of the deceased peer.

“He raised our rents!” cried a farmer.

“And lowered our wages!” growled the laborers.

“ He rode down our crops !”

“ And enforced the game laws !”

“ Our daughters have been debauched, and seduced from their homes !”

“ And now they are murdered !”

“ Let us burn the castle for vengeance !”
shouted an incendiary.

“ It will beat rick burning !”

“ Hurrah !—to the castle !”

Stragglers, aroused by the explosion join them—the storm had ceased—they rush tumultuously onwards --- some carry torches---their countenances are inflamed with passion ---they resemble demons rather than men. The sun rises, but his rays cannot penetrate the black clouds that obscure the heavens.

The castle is fired---by degrees flame and smoke burst from the windows, at length a gigantic blaze darts from the roof towards the sky. Far and wide are heard the crackling of the oaken beams, and old carved panelling, relics of bye-gone centuries, a shower

of sparks descend upon the heads of the incendiaries, the number of spectators momentarily increased, and the menial's tale again and again retold.

* * * * *

Wonders of art and costly treasures lie buried beneath the fallen palace of luxury; but no one seeketh to drag them from their grave. There is a curse upon the castle of the impostor; never again shall it be inhabited. To this day Wilsdown is a desolate and moss-grown ruin. But the strangers who visit it, pause and converse in wondrous horror of the dark misdeeds and unparalleled crimes of the last lord of the castle.

CHAPTER XXIII.**FINALE.**

THE fearful catastrophe described in the preceeding chapter, the manifold atrocities of the deceased peer, and the wonderful imposture he had carried on with such extraordinary and inconceivable success, formed almost the only topics of conversation amongst all classes of people. The newspapers teemed with the subject, sketches of his life and adventures appeared in every journal, whilst each day

under the auspices of the indefatigable penny a liners, prolifically brought forth, new marvels concerning our hero's career. Ridiculously exaggerated and utterly false as were many of the stories propagated, they yet fell short of the truth in many respects, and indeed, numerous discoveries of the most startling character were made upon investigating the affairs of the distinguished suicide. His estates were mortgaged to at least thrice their value. He had borrowed immense sums upon his mere personal security of the Jews, and on no security at all of all his friends—Lord Friakerton's debt was the largest in amount—he had defrauded whole hosts of tradesmen, of every description, to an almost fabulous extent. To no less than three publishers he had shewn the M.S. of a work which never existed, (he did not allow them to read more than the first chapter) and induced them, from his great fashion and reputation, to advance considerable sums. To some of his creditors

he had even contrived to give cheques in exchange for cash which were never honored. But it were tedious to enumerate all his delusions practised upon goldsmiths, upholsterers, picture dealers, and a hundred more. Are they not written in the Times and Heralds of the day?— In round numbers, to form a rough estimate of his unprecedented depredations, his liabilities amounted to *above a million of money!*

Never before had a man without fortune, contrived to incur such prodigious debts. Yet, in “the last speech and dying confession,” hawked about the street, these were the least of his enormities. Meaner rogues were forgotten, and their names swept into oblivion, to make room for the immortal infamy accorded by universal acclamation, to the memory of (*par excellence*) the *man without a conscience.*

* * * *

We will now, after the manner of other his-

torians, before concluding our tale, glance briefly at the fate of the surviving characters who have figured in our wild, though we trust, not inconsistent drama. Sanguinary as may have appeared our pen in the last few chapters, we are not yet prepared to rival certain illustrious Frenchmen, who, at the conclusion of their romances, occasionally, seem scarcely awake to the vital necessity of leaving, at least, *one* man alive to tell the fate of his fellows. .

A few days after the death of Lord Wilsdown—for by that title, was our adventurer still recognised—the Prince de Rosenberg called upon *Lady Wilsdown*—we leave the particulars of their interview to the imagination of the reader—in another year they were united in the bands of holy matrimony, in the same church which had witnessed the nuptials of the Imposter.

Years have rolled away, and little princes and princesses abound; but Aurelius still con-

tinues to perform miracles, and tries educational experiments upon his children with encouraging success. A lurking inclination to better and reform the world, disturbs his quiet to this very day; and, in spite of the sneers of the worldly, he is constantly engaged in numberless philanthropic schemes for the benefit of the human race—which, it is to be hoped, will signally prosper. Since he has been married, very few ladies have fallen in love with him, which delights him exceedingly—for he is too humane to take pleasure in their sufferings. Augusta is still a beauty, and the admired centre of a refined and literary circle.

Mr. Merlmore is quite at his ease; his wife is dead, and he has established himself with his daughter.

Colonel Rossmill still frequently laments not possessing a cast of our hero's phrenological development, and passes much of his time with Aurelius.

The Honourable Wigman lost his leg as we

have already mentioned. His second says that Biron fired before his time ; but this discovery was made after the death of the latter, and we have read the fable of the lion and the ass. However, everybody believes it ; and, perhaps, a crime more or less, does no great harm to the reputation of the departed.

Lord Friskerton finally married the Duchess of Villersden. By tacit consent, the name of Lord Wilsdown is never mentioned between them.

Clara Gordon died of consumption and grief, caused by the loss of her child.

Guy Merlmore in escaping from his pursuers, leapt from one of the bridges into the Thames, and strange to say, was completely restored to reason by the violence of the shock. After a serious illness he recovered, and meeting with Mrs. Bernard Tullamore, recognised in the fair widow, the object of his former passion.

He proposed, was accepted, and they are now

living at Florence in very excellent style. No return of his symptoms has appeared, nor hath he been heard to express regret for the destruction of Monville, the attorney, whose fate he looks upon as a just retribution, for the years of madness and suffering he had endured, through that unprincipled personage's agency.

Mr. and Mrs. Scales, though not afflicted with babies, are still happy in each others' society, and frequent guest of the Rosenbergs and the Friskertons.

Sago, the valet, received a letter from his late master, informing him that he had imbibed a slow poison, to which no antidote existed. The effects of the constant fear, thus excited upon his imagination, caused his death. He quoted Cato in his last moments.

AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER.

THE RED KING.

* * * *

THE wild west windswept, uninterrupted, across the boundless plain, and the glorious disk of the sun sank calmly below the smooth and tree-less horizon, as a caravan of enterprising merchants traversed the vast rolling prairies in the far west of North America, on their road to California.

Extending in a long line for nearly a quarter of a mile, the caravan consisted of some dozen waggons, and about thrice the number of well-mounted horsemen, who dressed for the most part in white linen, on account of the heat, and armed with long rifles and bowie knives as a precaution against the Indians, presented a remarkably gay and gallant appearance.

“For my part,” said the elder, and stouter of a pair of travellers, who rode some paces in advance of the rest, “for my part I don’t believe half I hear, and I reckon that the *Red King* is no more a cannibal, than our president.

The comrade of the Yankee merchant was a very young man, strikingly handsome, but of a sombre and melancholy aspect, he bestrode a magnificent white horse, and his rifle was of the finest English manufacture. He, himself, was an Englishman, and the only one of the party who had no commercial interest in the success of the adventure.

"I have heard much," rejoined the youth, "of that wondrous personage, but would willingly learn more, if you will be kind enough to enlighten me."

"Little enough is known of him," replied the Yankee, it is now fifteen years or more since a great chief rose up amongst the Indians. That he is some renegade foreigner is certain, but whether Englishman, or Spaniard, American, or Frenchman, is still a question, and I guess no white man need calculate upon returning to tell us, who has once had the luck to fall into his clutches."

"Did you ever know any one who had seen this savage potentate?" enquired the stranger with interest.

"No," said the merchant, "not exactly, but I have heard that he is a fine looking man, and of gigantic stature, and strength. He was taken prisoner once on a marauding expedition, in Arkansas, and effected his escape in the most surprising maner, leaping over chasms of

inconceivable breadth, and swimming rivers, like a river horse. By degrees he has established his power, and a species of secret league amongst almost every tribe of Indians, whose hatred of the whites he has fomented to the highest pitch. Innumerable bloody battles have been fought on the frontier, and his military skill in disciplining, or rather in turning the want of discipline amongst the Indians, to account, is amazing! It seems as if he had suddenly given them national spirit, arms, tactics, and a leader. For my part, I do not believe all I hear, but they *say* he has been seen scouring the prairie on the back of a wild bison, and that he can cleave a strong man in twain by a single blow from his Damascus sabre. Of his wealth, the reports are, I reckon, exaggerated, but they *do* say that he has rebuilt one of the ruined cities in the country of the Snake Indians, and collected there many beautiful Mexican girls, and all the luxuries of civilization. However this is certain, he

has obtained a wonderful influence over the Shoshones, the Arriphaves the Comanches, the Crows, the flat heads, and even the more northern tribes of Indians, Black feet, and Chippeways, the Cree Indians, and many more. Gamblers and rogues of every kind from Texas, and the Western states, have joined him, and still continue to do so in great numbers; in short, he has laid the foundation of a new Indian Empire, and is called by all the world *The Red King*—and that's a fact!"

"And nothing is known of his origin?" inquired the stranger, at this triumphant conclusion of the Yankee Merchant's story.

"Nothing," replied his companion.

"It is very mysterious!" murmured the stranger.

"Not the only thing that is mysterious in the world," said the Yankee, remembering that all his cross-questioning had proved insufficient to penetrate the secret of his companion's destination (who had only joined the caravan

on the previous day), or indeed to ascertain anything relating either to his name, family objects, interests, or business in that quarter of the globe. And yet there was that in the young stranger's appearance and manners eminently calculated to excite curiosity, and the man by his side happened to be of an especially inquisitive nature.

"So you are not going to Monterrey?" recommenced the Yankee with the perseverance of a man who knew circumstances did not admit of his employing his time in any more profitable occupation.

"No!" replied the Englishman, giving him a black look, before which the other could not help quailing, "I am not going to Monterrey—I shall leave you within a few hours."

"Southward? I suppose," said the merchant.

The stranger shook his head, and appeared suddenly wrapped in the contemplation of some imperceptible object in the distance.

“I wonder who the devil he is!” thought the Yankee, not the Red King himself, in disguise, I guess!—no he is too young. Yet there is something suspicious about his joining us as he did, and he has an uncommon fierce look, when he pleases, where can he be going I should like to know—something tarnation deep no doubt. Ah! I’ve nailed it, he is one of the Red King’s emissaries from England; I always thought England was at the bottom of the whole affair. Yes that’s it—hallo! what have we here?”

“Indians!” responded the nearest of the troops examining the lock of his rifle.

In truth a band of about twenty Comanche cavaliers as they are termed, now came in view. A slight undulation of the ground had hitherto concealed them from the sight of the caravan.

“We are double their number!” exclaimed the Yankee, “they will scarcely venture to attack us.”

But the troop continued to bear down upon the caravan, until within some hundred yards of the travellers, when a shot from the rifle of the Indian leader laid the unfortunate merchant in the dust.

"I will avenge you!" shouted the young stranger, "his blood excited by the novelty of his situation, spurring his horse onwards in order to get a closer aim for his unpractised hand.

Meanwhile volleys had been exchanged on both sides, several Americans, and two Indians were wounded, and a most desperate hand to hand conflict had commenced. The Indian leader was a European, as his complexion plainly testified; wherever his red plume appeared, the sweep of his long sabre was fatal in its effects. Such was his prowess that no one for an instant doubted but that they saw before them the renowned hero of the West, the redoubtable *Red King* himself, and despite the inequality of numbers, and the valor of

the Americans, victory was at the least doubtful, when the English traveller having unhorsed the cavalier with whom he was engaged, rode up to the side of the far famed warrior, and lodged the contents of his rifle in his side.

The Red King instantly fell from his saddle, and the remaining Indians immediately seeing that all was lost, took to flight with the greatest agility.

Meanwhile the Englishman had sprung from his horse, and thrown himself by the side of the wounded chief—when lo! a strange phenomenon arrested the gaze of the bye-standers. Never was seen a more striking resemblance than that of the stranger, to the dying man—the same lofty stature, the same magnificent forehead and large dark eyes, the same delicately chiselled nose and chin, the same peculiar curl of lip, the very frown was the same, and but that the Red King must have nearly reached his fortieth year, and the Englishman could have numbered little more than twenty,

and that the hair of the latter was a shade lighter, perhaps, and his skin fair as a princess's, whilst the countenance of the former was somewhat bronzed by the sun, it would have been difficult to have pointed out any distinctive difference in their features,

With increasing horror the stranger beheld this likeness of the Indian leader to himself, a vague fear awoke in his mind, and he stammered a trembling hope that the wound of the Chief might not prove serious.

“It is neither so deep as a well, nor so broad as a church door—but it will do—” said the Red King with a bitter sneer, fixing his eye upon a small and peculiar ring on the finger of his destroyer,—“boy, you go to meet your father?”

“I received a note—”

“I know all—you were brought up an orphan—you had fortune, friends, everything you need have desired ; but you were a bastard,

and you longed to know to whom you owed your being."

"True, true," muttered the stranger, gazing with increasing horror upon the wounded warrior.

"It is too late—your own accursed hand has deprived you of a father."

"Eternal God!—you are then——"

Mesmer de Biron, the bastard son of him who died for Greece—it is fitting that *I* should perish for the red men of the West.

"Oh horrible!" exclaimed the son of Clara, burying his face in his hands.

"Do you lament that you have discovered a father in one so infamous?"

"But Lord Wilsdown committed suicide?"

"No—simply another homicide, Valence, the robber performed my part on that occasion."

"Forgive me, father!" cried the unfortunate youth, pressing the cold hand of the dying Mesmer in his own.

“ My son, it is enough that I have seen you before I die, life has been rifled by me of its enjoyments, I am prepared for death. Farewell !”

For a long time the young stranger knelt with his eyes fixed wildly on the countenance of his father, so slight was the change that he could scarcely believe him dead, or conceive that from those matchless features had for ever faded the heavenly light of intelligence.

“ And to die by *my* hand, one, for whom he had so well and amply cared, whatever may have been his sins towards others, and to die suddenly and unrepenting. — O misery immeasurable !”

It was night---the caravan was gone ; for they feared the return of the Indians, and the English stranger remained alone in darkness by the side of his father, and poured forth the anguish of his soul in the solitude of the boundless prairie.

And the Red King never returned to the

tribes, neither hath his corpse been found by any Indian ; and of the English Stranger, who slew him, were never afterwards heard tidings.

Whether they, one or both, perished in the wilderness, or returned to the haunts of men, or fled to distant countries, remains to this day a mystery.

And he who hath written these volumes is now silent—for his task is ended, and the pen is thrown aside, not destined perhaps to be resumed. Would that this parting were as painful to the reader as it is to the author.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

THE following brief accounts of phrenology, mesmerism, &c., are, it will be perceived, not addressed to those already deeply versed in the subject; but to such of our readers as accident may not have thrown in the way of enlarged works upon, or communicative students of the above sciences. There are many too, who, although without either patience or inclination to wade through a thick book, are not averse to the perusal of a brief treatise on matters which they perchance hold in derision, or at best regard with indifference.

Should we succeed in arousing but one incredulous mind to a sense of the importance and utility of their study, we shall not deem our labours altogether fruitless. Condensation and perspicuity will, in the following pages, be our principal aim, though, of course, the narrowness of our limits will not permit of extended detail. We shall first present an outline of the science of—

PHRENOLOGY.

Phrenology is that science which teaches the various functions of the different portions of the brain. These which were originally discovered by Dr. Gall are termed organs, and their outward or craniological development is vulgarly known by the name of *bumps*, a ridiculous nomenclature which leads to error in young beginners. It is to be supposed that the particles of brain constituting each organ possess certain chemical or other peculiarities adapting them to the particular sensations of which they are, as it were, the conductors or indices. How the mind becomes conscious of these operations we shall not now pause to examine, as it is by

far too extensive a subject to be casually spoken of, but at once pass on to the consideration of the uses to which phrenology may be applied, and the benefits to be derived from its application.

In the first place it renders us alive to the weaker points in our own characters, and puts us upon our guards against our own imperfections. Knowing ourselves to have a certain organ of redundant or deficient dimensions, we control its exaggerated exertion or systematically exercise it, as we do the muscles of our arms and legs by fencing, walking, &c., in order to increase and strengthen it. Thus, by degrees, a man born of a miserly disposition may convert himself to liberality. A coward become courageous, a vain man habitually modest, &c., with great advantage both to themselves and others. Slow and arduous are the steps to self knowledge—but to the wise, the page of nature is ever open.

A second use of phrenology is the clue it gives us to the nature and disposition of others. The advantages of which knowledge, in our private relations, and in matters of biography and history need no comments.

A third use to which this noble science may be employed is to guide men in their decision as to the future calling or profession of their children. We all know to what incalculable misery and misfortune, errors of parents on this important head have paved the way. Thus we have legislators, magistrates, students of medicine and law, deficient in reasoning powers, concentrativeness, firmness, and other requisite faculties; artists with small perceptive organs and inconsiderable comparison or ideality; clergymen without veneration; soldiers with negative combativeness; architects wanting constructiveness; merchants devoid of acquisitiveness; and many other anomalies, which, by the aid of phrenology, will, I trust, soon disappear from amongst us.

I shall now proceed to give a brief description of the human brain. The brain consists then, firstly, of the cerebrum or brain proper, which occupies the upper part of the interior of the skull, and the cerebellum or lesser brain below it, which is intimately connected with, and forms as it were the commencement of the spinal marrow, and is the

seat of sexual and muscular powers;* a discovery, for which we are indebted to my dear friend H. G. Atkinson, F. G. S., whose unwearied spirit of investigation in the domain of phrenology and the pathology of the nerves, together with his extraordinary mesmeric cures, effected with the purest philanthropic motives are well known to the medical and fashionable world.

And I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him for the advice and assistance he has kindly given to me in the phrenological and magnetic portion of these volumes, in hope that, ere long, he will favor the world with the results of his varied and deeply interesting studies, experiments, and discoveries in regions hitherto so insufficiently explored. Let him remember that the *novum prematur in annum* principle may be carried too far. *Nous verrons.*

The whole brain, greater and lesser, is further divided perpendicularly into two dis-

* The intimate relation borne by the muscular to the sexual organs, cannot be too deeply pondered by the medical practitioners, who often appear almost to lose sight altogether of this weighty fact.

inct halves or hemispheres,* each containing the same number of corresponding organs; whereof we append a correct list, for reference, to the *map* in the frontispiece, which, as will be perceived, shews only that portion of the head containing the brain. The little caricatures were sketched by me to illustrate the science of mnemonics or artificial memory, (otherwise termed phrenotypics, ideatypics

* On this ground Dr. Wigan founded his work on the duality of the mind, as I know to my cost; for a critic in the *Spectator*, having just reviewed the said book, wound up a critique upon Anti Coningsby, which immediately followed, by the strikingly logical conclusion that either the author (poor devil!) was—something, I forget what, at the moment—or *his mind was most assuredly in a dual state*, a Greek-grammar-like peculiarity, the critic seemed to forget, shared by the whole human race. But there was a deeper meaning concealed beneath this enigma than to a superficial reader would have been at first sight perceptible. The fact was the novel itself was *dual*—being in two very unorthodox volumes. Yet, ‘Specky is an honourable man’—I forgive him that and his other blunders (such as calling me a penny-a-liner!) from my heart, and wish all reviewers were as impartial!

I have received some curious hints from a scientific friend on the magnetic polarity of the two sides of the brain, and the existence of a negative and positive permeating fluid producing sensations, the number or strength of which should determine the extent of the perception, but the theory is as yet too much in its infancy to be seriously considered here.

with many other lengthy designations) and I think that the reader, having once compared the map with the following list, will find such facility in remembering the names and positions of the organs, that he will no longer doubt (presuming that he ever did so) the importance of *association and localization of ideas* as an aid to the recollection. Perhaps even whilst laughing at the apparently far-fetched absurdity of the means, he may upon other occasions find the advantage of connecting a thing to be remembered with images derived from more than one sense, in the imagination.

THE ORGANS OF THE BRAIN.

FEELINGS.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Amativeness. | 11. Love of Approba- |
| 2. Philoprogenitive- | tion. |
| ness. | 12. Cautiousness. |
| 3. Concentrative- | 13. Benevolence. |
| ness. | 14. Veneration. |
| 4. Adhesiveness. | 15. Firmness. |
| 5. Combativeness. | 16. Conscientiousness |
| 6. Destructiveness. | 17. Hope. |
| 7. Secretiveness. | 18. Wonder. |
| 8. Acquisitiveness. | 19. Ideality. |
| 9. Constructiveness. | 20. Wit. |
| 10. Self-Esteem. | 21. Imitation. |

INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 22. Individuality. | 29. Order. |
| 23. Form. | 30. Eventuality. |
| 24. Size. | 31. Time. |
| 25. Weight. | 32. Tune. |
| 26. Colouring. | 33. Language. |
| 27. Locality. | 34. Comparison. |
| 28. Number. | 35. Causality. |
36. Gustotiveness marked by a cross on the older phrenological casts.

Before concluding this treatise, we would warn the young phrenological student of the absolute necessity of great care and practice in the examination of heads. The extreme length is generally measured with a piece of tape, from the organ of Individuality to that of Philoprogenitiveness inclusive, and twenty-two to twenty-three inches are considered most advantageous. We would also warn him in judging of a character, by no means to be too hasty in deciding that phrenology is wrong because—"Mr. or Mrs. Somebody is positively so very benevolent or so very destructive!" Let him weigh the matter deliberately ; if possible, by a re-examination, endeavour to discover whether he has not miscalculated the size or locality of an organ.

what other developments counterbalance the effects of those above mentioned, and how far his previous estimate of the individual in question is consistent with his words and actions; an analysis too often utterly neglected. The general temperament is a matter also of importance. The following will be found in every variety of combination, one or other however generally predominating.

Nervous, active.

Bilious, power of enduring.

Sanguine, impulsive, excitable.

Lymphatic, tending to inactivity and dullness.

But our space is limited, and our outlines of science require much shading by more practised hands. We should not have attempted in the narrow limits of an appendix to a work of fiction, even the light task we have undertaken but that it is our intention to send these few pages into the world, at the same time in a cheaper and perhaps more appropriate form in the hope that they may prove the porch to a temple infinitely more elaborate in adornment and dimensions.

Above all, beware of materialism, and bear ever in mind that exquisite as is its organization, wonderful as are its functions, without the

divine particle—the breath of *life*—in fine without a *soul*, the brain is but a clod of matter, inanimate and useless as the dust we tread on. Well might Mephistopheles say to the student—

Wer will was lebendigs erkennen und beschreiben
Sucht erst den Geist heraus zu treiben,
Dann had er die Theile in seiner Hand,
Fehlt leider ! nur das geistige Band ;
Encheiresin naturæ, neunt's die Chemie,
Spottet ihrer selbst and weiss nicht wie.

which may be thrown into the following English verses—

He that would understand ought living,
Begins by out the spirit driving ;
The *parts* he has then for dissection
Wanting, alas ! the divine connection.
Encheiresin naturæ, the chemists sigh,
And mock themselves and know not why.

FAUST.

M E S M E R I S M .

OTHERWISE CALLED ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

ALTHOUGH we find traces of this science in the most ancient times, in the Orphic mysteries, the

oracles of Greece, and Druidical rites of the Celtic tribes, although, consciously or unconsciously exerted, the magnetic influence has beyond all doubt from the remotest ages played by no means an obscure part in the working of so called miracles, and the cure of multifarious diseases, not to mention prophecies, oracles, sorcery, fortune-telling, and other wonders ascribed to supernatural causes by the ignorance of priests and laymen, unacquainted with the rudiments of philosophy; it was Frederick Anthony Mesmer who was born to become the discoverer of the most glorious principle of nature with which we are as yet acquainted.

Without entering into any discussion (which indeed my limits do not permit of) as to the existence or non-existence of magnetic fluid, I shall now simply give my own opinion of the nature of this extraordinary power deduced from extensive observation, reading and inquiry, viz., that magnetism is the powerful exertion of *will* combined with a lively faith to produce a given effect upon another body, and that this exercise of volition is, whatever may be the mode in which it acts, the *primary* cause of the said effects.

And these are, briefly, a sensation of calm,

drowsiness, sleep, sleepwaking in which the patient can walk, converse, &c. ; deeper states, clairvoyance, capability of reading with closed eyes or through other objects ; mental traveling and knowledge of remote localities ; intuition, consciousness of derangements in the patient's own or other person's corporeal system ; pre-voyance or foreseeing future events, accompanied at times by intense sympathy with the magnetiser, and consciousness of all his sensations ; phreno-magnetism or the excitement of the different feelings, by contact with the appropriate organs in the magnetic-trance (discovered by Mr. Atkinson) and strikingly conformatory of the truth of phrenology, and last not least relief, and cure from pain and disease of various kinds, with or without sleep, surgical operations and amputation of limbs without even the knowledge of the sufferer.*

* I trust the reader will not doubt my seriousness in the above remarks, on account of the following epigram, which occurred to me at a *soiree musicale* a short time since—

THE MARCH OF MESMERISM.

Amputation now loses all pain,
Legs are cut off like slices of melon,
And hanging is viewed with disdain,
For Jack Ketch mesmerises the felon !

Descriptions of most of these phenomena founded upon innumerable authentic cases will be found in 'The Impostor.' So far from being exaggerated, many of the incidents are really deprived of still more astonishing details. The *manner* of magnetising is also more than once described and the philosophical conclusions to which mesmeric phenomena inevitably lead the sound and unprejudiced logician, sufficiently clearly pointed out to render any repetition here necessary.

And let me entreat you, sceptical reader, candidly to reflect that *experience* is the best, the only test of the possibility of a fact. Experimentalise for yourself with patient desire of knowledge, be not daunted by a failure or two, nor grudge to the attainment of conviction of a truth more glorious than all other sciences put together, the trouble you would accord to the most trifling experiment in mechanics on chemistry. The author of this work, nay every one of the most eminent magnetisers of the day were once as sceptical as yourself.

I will not insult your reason by attempting to disprove or even hold up to the ridicule, of

which the notion is so susceptible, the absurd theory of *Satanic agency*, started by certain brain-clouded fanatics and adopted by many half-educated persons—no I trust that, once more to quote my dear Goëthe, in these enlightened times—

“ The northern phantom man now scorns,
Where see you hoofs or tail or horns ?”

but I would warn you—

Firstly, against the obstinate prejudices of the medical faculty, who are invariably opposed to every new remedy that interferes with their practice. A very *feasible* excuse, it is true; but not one which ought to influence an unbiassed judgment. See Sir. E. B, Lytton's letter in the New Monthly and my chapter in the foregoing work on the *Water cure*, written curiously enough, almost contemporaneously.

Secondly. Be not too hasty in attributing imposture to any particular case, or to conclude from one instance of the kind, that *all* are so. The greatest wonders of magnetism are beyond the power of charlatans and may

be tested beyond the possibility of deception.*

Thirdly, as a mental preparation for the wonders about to reveal themselves, consider gravely the incomprehensible nature of dreams, imagination, presentiment and natural somnambulism (of which the simple state of magnetism is but an artificial production.) Think how often in visions of the night you have seen places and people never seen before, imagined with almost the vividness of reality far distant scenes and times, in the very act of speaking found the words taken as it were from your lips by another, the uncomfortable sensations preceding some dire catastrophe, the thought or conversation upon some particular individual who at that moment knocks at the door or sends you a letter, the nightly gambols of the fearless sleep-walker—and who has not known at least one instance of the kind. Talk

* A very sceptical friend of mine having witnessed several public and private exhibitions of the celebrated clairvoyant, Calliste, offered him a considerable sum (ten thousand francs) for his secret, under an inviolable promise of secrecy. "I have no secret," replied the astonished young somnambulist, "I wish I had!"

to me no more of 'odd coincidences,' but think, observe, compare, and candidly acknowledge that—

“There are more things in earth and heaven,
Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in thy philosophy.”

For further information on the subject, I refer you to the works of Mesmer himself, and to those of Townshend, Colquhoun, Deleuze, Teste, and for recent cases 'The Critic,' an ably conducted weekly, and 'The Zoist,' a quarterly journal, edited by the famous Dr. Elliotson whose strenuous exertions in the cause of magnetism, it would be indeed unjust to pass over however widely we may differ in our views. Whether the doctor will ever reconcile himself to having a mind, or I shall ever be content to live and think without one, yet remains to be seen—with many other wonders.

THE VESTIGES OF CREATION.

HAVING alluded to this remarkable work, it was my intention to have considered the prin-

ciples it advocates more at length in this appendix. Time however and space compel me to defer the intention for the present.

A rough outline of its contents may be found in the burlesque of my hero, the work itself however displays great research, and ingenuity. It certainly does not present us with a lucid and harmonious system of nature, but it is a great stride forwards in the generalization, and popular treatment of astronomy, geology, and other sciences bearing upon cosmogony. In abusing it so fiercely, the quarterly reviews seemed altogether to overlook the prodigious labour and difficulty of condensing digesting and classifying so vast an amount of facts; but with their usual pettiness of soul were only eager to expose the geological and physiological errors of the author whose work has at least the merit of a certain degree of originality in conception, and decidedly affords amusement in perusal.

On the probability of the theory of development, I am not prepared to offer a hasty opinion, though I must confess that from an examination of embryo brains, and fœtus, made by me very recently, for the express purpose, at the King's College Museum, I was induced

to believe that at no time does the human brain from the first period that it becomes perceptible, resemble either that of a fish, a reptile, or a bird. This however is a subject for future discussion, Meanwhile 'The Vestiges' are not only clever in themselves, but will, we trust, be the cause of cleverness in others, and lead to still greater and bolder attempts at the unravelment of nature's mystic web.*

THE GAMBLING HOUSE.

There are some dark truths that cannot be too often repeated, one of them is the fact that gambling tables are the resort of but two classes --sharpers and dupes. There are exceptions to every rule, to this they are especially rare.

* Mrs. Trollope, the entertaining authoress, has been before hand with me, I see, in making fun of the vestiges. (See the 'Attractive Man,' vol 3.) I should be sorry to suspect the off-hand fair one of being "unable to make anything else of them," as a lovely friend of mine sarcastically (not to say spitefully) insinuates.

It is a common case to suppose that there can be no cheating at *rouge et noir*. This is a gross mistake, the whole is a cheat, the chances to begin with, are against you, and the watchful *croupier* has it in his power by passing a card, in a way which, if cleverly executed, the keenest eye is unable to detect, to give victory to whichever color he pleases. Of course he will always, if possible, give it to that on which his quiet eye has detected the fewest stakes. Were it not for the *decoys* it would be a safe game to play always with the weaker side, though even that would require great practice. As it is, play is madness. Roulette is a still grosser swindle. A pedal, worked by the knee of the *croupier*, decides the color and the number. In fine, it is playing against destiny. Dice are still more delusive toys—it is so easy to measure their angles, to spin them, and ascertain that they are genuine—but then it is so much easier for the demon of the table to change them a dozen times for those falsely cut or loaded!

These and many other equally ingenious tricks were kindly explained to me lately, and fully illustrated by a gentleman of remarkable talents; especially for conjuring and mechan-

cal contrivance. They have been often exposed before—alas! how often has it been proclaimed that in the juggle of thimble rigs at Ascot, the pea is in reality always in the hand of the man, until the moment of raising the thimble ---yet Gulls are found. What is known to be easier than to establish signals at whist, still are misguided youths found ready to play for high stakes with people they meet perchance for the first time—aye even with man and wife!--“But then at the house of such an honorable man”—O innocence! let one who has been fleeced, unless your purse be longer than your patience, warn you in time. Better go dabble in railways, or bet against the favorite for the St. Leger--the last is a sure card.

POPULAR ELECTIONS.

Say, does the present registration,
Or does it not want alteration ?
Should gentlemen, who tenant chambers,
At fifty or a hundred guineas,
Be voteless, whilst the snob who clambers
Up to a garret, poor, and thin, is
Renting a ten pound tenement,
Whose lodgers mayhap, clear his rent,
Goes to the hustings gives a plumper,
(For value paid), then in a bumper
The placeman treats who on him preyed,
Or the patrician fool, who would, but cannot
aid ?
Or say, should gold at all decide
What rights be given or denied ?
Or knowledge, conduct, education
Endow with voice to guide a nation ?
He ? fresh electors, registration,
Perchance they'll sell their votes, with more
discrimination !

NEWSPAPER LITERATURE.

In the frontispiece to this volume I have
designed an imaginary meeting of the London
journals, in shapes emblematic of their several

idiosyncrasies. It is scarcely necessary to observe that *The Times* is the gentleman balancing himself in the centre. *The Times* are out of joint, as may be seen by his knees. *Punch* is riding a joke to death, as usual, in the back ground. The '*Asinæum*,' (immortalized in Paul Clifford) may be easily recognized. The *Quarterlies* are asleep in the foreground, (with the exception of the *Westminster*, who is very wide awake, and absent on a railway excursion,) fat, overgrown, heavy looking creatures they are indeed, the gimlets in their hands remind us of their irradicable boring propensities. The monthly magazines are shelved. Blackwood and Bentley are standing on their heads as a last effort to amuse the public, albeit in vastly different styles; whilst Fraser may be recognized by the *tonsure*, and the New Monthly by his whiskers. The reader will have no difficulty in deciphering the rest.—Addio!

